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THE ENGLISH POETS

T. H. WARD.

VOL. V.

BROWNING TO RUPERT BROOKE

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THE

ENGLISH POETS

SELECTIONS

WITH CRITICAL INTRODUCTIONS

BY VARIOUS WRITERS

AND A GENERAL INTRODUCTION BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD

EDITED BY

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Late Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford

VOL. V

BROWNING to RUPERT BROOKE

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PREFACE

The Fifth Volume of *The English Poets* deals with those writers who have died during the period that has elapsed since Volume IV was published in its original form—a period of nearly forty years. It may be remembered that to that volume in 1894 we added an Appendix, containing Selections from Browning, Matthew Arnold, and Tennyson. This Appendix was afterwards incorporated in the volume; and now, for the better convenience of readers, it has been detached from Volume IV and placed at the beginning of Volume V.

This volume differs from its predecessors in the fact that nearly all the poems included, having been so recently issued, are still "in copyright." To the owners of the right we had therefore to apply for permission before we could publish; and we now gratefully express our acknowledgment of the permission so given. The detailed list of those who have enabled us to publish, and to whom we tender our thanks, is as follows:

Clarendon Press and Mrs. Dixon	in respect of	R. W. Dixon.
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ROBERT BROWNING

[ROBERT BROWNING was born in 1812. His father was an official in the Bank of England, his mother of Scottish and German origin. In 1833 he published *Pauline;* in 1835 *Paracelsus*. In 1837 his tragedy of *Strafford* was produced by Macready, and in 1841, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*. *Sordello* appeared in 1840. From 1841 to 1846 he produced a series of poems under the name of *Bells and Pomegranates:* it comprised most of his plays and some of his finest Dramatic Romances and Lyrics, but it had not a large sale. In 1846 he married Elizabeth Barrett, the poetess, and they lived in Italy till her death in 1861. During these years he published *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, *In a Balcony*, and *Men and Women*. He returned to England in 1861 and lived chiefly in London. In 1864 he published *Dramatis Personæ;* in 1868–9 *The Ring and the Book*. During the last twenty years of his life his literary activity was great. He published *Balaustion's Adventure*, *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*, *Fifine at the Fair*, *Aristophanes' Apology*, *The Agamemnon of Æschylus*, *The Inn Album*, *Pacchiarotto*, *La Saisiaz*, *The Two Poets of Croisic*, *Dramatic Idyls*, *Jocoseria*, *Ferishtah's Fancies*, *Parleyings with certain People of Importance in their Day*. He died at Venice on Dec. 12, 1889, and almost on the same day was published his latest volume of poems, *Asolándo*. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.]

Seventy years ago the critics and the public alike were bowing Tom Moore into the House of Fame and letting down the latch upon Shelley and Keats outside. This and other shocking examples of the vanity of contemporary criticism might impose eternal silence on the critic, did they not also make it plain that his mistakes are of no earthly consequence. For such door-keepers are but mortals, and the immortals have plenty of time; they keep on knocking. The door was obdurately shut against Browning for many years, but when it opened, it opened wide; and he is surely not of those whom another age shows out by the back way. But his exact position in England's House of Fame that other age must determine. Mere versatility does not there count for much; since in the scales of time one thing right well done is sure to outweigh many pretty well done. But that variousness of genius which

springs from a wide-sweeping imagination and sympathies that range with it counts for very much. In his comprehension of the varied aspects of human nature, in his power of dramatically presenting them, Browning stands alone among the poets of a great poetic age. Will these things loom larger in the distance, or when Prince Posterity comes to be King, will his royal eye be caught first by uncouth forms, by obscurities and weary prolixities? We cannot tell whether our poet will be freshly crowned or coldly honoured, for he beyond all others is the intellectual representative of his own generation, and his voice is still confused and it may be magnified by its echoes in the minds of his hearers.

His own generation indeed meant more than one. He represented in some respects the generation into which he was born, but yet more a later one which he antedated. This being so, he could not expect an eager welcome from his earlier contemporaries. Phantoms of the past are recognisable, and respectable, but phantoms of the future are rarely popular. Yet it was fortunate that he stood just where he did in time, rather than nearer to those who were coming to meet him and call him Master. For he was born while the divine breath of Poetry, that comes we know not whence and goes we know not whither, was streaming over England. He grew up through years when she stood elate, with victory behind her, and looking forward with all manner of sanguine beliefs in the future. So he brought into a later age not only the fuller poetic inspiration, the sincere Romance of the earlier, but its sanguine confident temperament. This temperament alone would not have recommended him to a generation which had been promised Canaan and landed in a quagmire, had it not been combined with others which made him one of themselves. But this being so, his cheerful courage, his belief in God and the ultimate triumph of good were as a tower of strength to his weaker brethren. It was not only as a poet, but as a prophet or philosopher, that he won his disciples. He himself once said that "the right order of things" is "Philosophy first, and Poetry, which is its highest outcome, afterwards." Yet this union of Philosophy and Poetry is dangerous, especially if Philosophy be allowed to take precedence. For Philosophy is commonly more perishable than Poetry, or at any rate it is apt sooner to require resetting to rid it of an antiquated air. Whatever is worth having in the philosophy of a Rousseau soon passes into the common stock. *Emile* is dead, but Rousseau lives by his pictures of beautiful Nature and singular human nature.

Browning's philosophy is mainly religious. It has been said of him with truth: "His processes of thought are often scientific in their precision of analysis; the sudden conclusion which he imposes upon them is transcendental and inept." This was not so much due to a defect in his own mind as to the circumstances of the world of thought about him. An interest in theological questions had been quickened and spread by more than one religious revival, and then scientific and historical criticism began to make its voice heard. Intelligent religious people could not close their ears to it, but they were as yet unprepared either to accept or to effectually combat its conclusions. Hence there arose in very many minds a confusion between two opposing strains of thought, similar to that which has been remarked in Browning's poetry, and something like a religious system in which what was called Doubt and Faith had each its allotted part. Here was plainly a transition state of thought, and it is one from which men's minds have already moved away in opposite directions; but it has left deep traces on the literature of the middle Victorian period. Browning's philosophy does not fundamentally differ from that of other poets and writers of the time. It was by his superior powers of analysis, by the swiftness and ingenuity of his mind, that he was in advance of them and retained his influence over a generation that had ceased to look to them for guidance. Besides, his philosophy does not all bear the stamp of the temporary. He has some less transient religious thoughts, and many varied and fertile views of human life, breathing energy, courage, benignant wisdom: and those who like can make a system of them.

But it is not by Philosophy, it is by Imagination and Form that a poet lives. In a century that has been wonderfully enriched with song, a time when we have all grown epicures in our taste for exquisite verse, too much has been said about Browning's want of form. It would be an absurdity to call a man a poet who had no sense of poetic form, who could not sing. Browning was a poet but not always a singer; song was not to him the inevitable language, the supreme instinct. When he strains his metre by attempting to pack more meaning into a line than it will bear with grace, when he juggles with far-fetched and hideous rhymes, he really ceases to be a poet and puts his laurels in jeopardy. But oftener his form, more especially his blank verse form, is justified by the fact that he is essentially a dramatic poet; his verse must fit the character and the mood in which he speaks. The Elizabethans,

who were no fumblers in the matter of metre, had their reasons for choosing a form for dramatic verse which should be not severe, but loose and flexible; a form which might alternately approach the classical iambus, a lyric measure and plain prose, yet remain more forcible than prose by the retention of a certain beat. It resembles not a mask and cothurn, but a fine and flowing garment, following the movements of the actor's limbs. Great is the liberty of English unrhymed verse, and nobly it has been used; it has given us the most various treasures, from the ordered magnificence of *Paradise Lost* to the lyric cry of Romeo at Juliet's grave. Browning has often misused his liberty, but by no means so often as his hasty critics suppose. Try to think of *Caliban upon Setebos*, and even *Dominus Hyacinthus*, in prose, and you see at once by the loss involved that they are really poems; that is, that the verse form, and their own special form, is an essential part of their excellence. His unrhymed verse is seldom or never rich and stately, it is sometimes harsh and huddled; but it is constantly vigorous and appropriate, it can flow with a clear idyllic grace, as in *Cleon* and *Andrea del Sarto*, or spring up in simple lyric beauty, as in *One Word more* and the dedication to *The Ring and the Book*. He had that great gift of singing straight from the heart which some great poets have lacked. Such songs have always an incommunicable charm, a piercing sweetness of their own. A strong emotion, whether personal or dramatic, has a magical effect in smoothing what is rugged and clearing what is turbid in Browning's style. For the rest, he wrote *Pippa Passes*, the gallant marching *Cavalier Songs*, the galloping ballad of *How they brought the Good News*, the serene harmonies of *Love among the Ruins*. These, and many other outbursts of beautiful song, make it doubly ridiculous to speak of him as a poet who could not sing. Yet is it true that he frequently sacrificed sound to sense. This the plain person thinks right, but the poet knows or should know it to be wrong. And it did not even save him from obscurity. Such are his deficiencies—the more noticeable because the whole tendency of the century has been and is toward the perfecting of lyric and narrative forms of verse. In dramatic poetry this age of poets has been strangely poor. Let Shelley's lurid drama of *The Cenci* be set aside in the high place that it deserves: after that the first seventy years of this century produced nothing of importance as dramatic poetry except Browning's work. For what makes work dramatic? Not special fitness for the stage, but the author's impersonality and power of char-

acterisation; the clash of human passions and interests on each other, the event or even the accident, that as in a lightning-flash reveals the dim hearts of men. In his dramatic power Browning stands alone among the poets of the nineteenth century.

In another aspect he stands alone. While they have remained curiously untouched by the most important literary movement of the last fifty years, he has been in it, and even, for a time, in advance of it. In his measure as a poet he is a realist. His aim, like that of contemporary writers of prose fiction, is to see and represent human life and character as it is. The history of literature during the entire century has been a history of revolts. Daumier represents the eloquent M. Prudhomme telling his son, with a noble sweep of the arm, how on the place where they now stand once stood a tyrannous barrier, but he, M. Prudhomme, and his friends right bravely knocked it down. "Yes, dear Papa," returns the child, looking a few yards ahead, "And then I see you built it up again a little further on." The barrier of the conventional has been constantly moved on, here quickly, there slowly; but in English poetry, since the great move that separated the eighteenth from the nineteenth century, it has been stationary. Browning climbed over it. He climbed over other barriers too, which have since been moved on. He was not afraid of passion when mild sentiment was the literary thing. Some one when he died made a sonnet commemorating him as the Poet of Love. For a moment it seemed strange that the philosopher, the psychologist, the man the ruggedness of whose genius had challenged so much criticism, should be lamented as the Poet of Love. Yet such he emphatically was. He was so not only because he had that power of singing straight from the heart to which I have before referred, but because he was fearlessly truthful in his presentation of human nature, and also because he was drawn by his dramatic bent to the strong situations which cannot be evolved out of mild sentiments. In the fearlessness as well as the subtlety of his psychology, he is from the first with Balzac rather than with his contemporaries in England, where the barriers were many and moved reluctantly. The play of light and shadow in the world, of good and evil in complex characters, has an endless attraction for him. The clear sweet song of his Pippa runs sparkling through dark scenes of crime and treachery; Chiappino is at the height of heroism when the Nuncio comes to him, and like a wise benevolent kind of devil, shows him the stupidity of heroism and all that sort of thing, and how much

better he can serve the world by serving his own interests first. Twice, in *Paracelsus* and in *The Return of the Druses*, he has taken impostors for his heroes, and shown them to have been so largely because they were men of finer mould than the most honest of their dupes. From first to last he feels a passionate interest in "the story of a soul." Now the simple soul, like the knife-grinder, has got no story. The simple heart, however, may have story enough, and it is the Pippa of all his work. It is, above all, truth of which he is in search, whether he paints the sixteenth-century bishop ordering his tomb, or the nineteenth-century bishop chatting over his wine. His aim is to keep poetry in touch not merely with the life of the imagination, but with life in general. It is of course where it touches this modern life of ours that the real poetic *crux* occurs. There will always be the stuff of poetry in the world, so long as there are hearts and souls in it, and so long as the earth moves on through starry space, clothed in her beautiful vesture of air. But either the surface of our life has really grown prosaic, or we think it has, which comes to the same thing. It requires tact as well as boldness and power to harmonise it with the imaginative atmosphere that we expect in poetry. Browning sometimes failed in tact; at other times, as in *Waring* and the brief poem called *Confessions*, his touch was sure. But this realism of his, at its best as well as its worst, inevitably repelled readers who were only just beginning to relish realism in prose. Besides, he had a language of his own, with a strange new flavour about it, which made him seem much more obscure than he really was. So here a little ahead of his contemporaries and there a great way, most of Robert Browning's road was something solitary. The pleasanter for him when one fine day he found a troop of followers marching behind him; young folk, full of sympathy and enthusiasm.

He had other things in common with them, besides realistic and psychological tendencies. His poems from *Sordello* onwards bear witness to his love and knowledge of Italian Art. This he had gained for himself as he travelled through Italy, looking round him with a painter's eye. But Ruskin taught a younger generation to share it with him. Then, though from first to last a sturdy lover of England, he was something of a cosmopolitan in his sympathies; and cosmopolitanism is strongly characteristic of the literature of to-day, and even mildly characteristic of the literary man. It used not to be so. The novelists of Browning's date can never quite repress their chuckles at the idea of any one being

ridiculous enough to be born a Frenchman or a German. The other poets travelled and even made their homes in Italy, but they were interested only in its scenery and romance. Browning not only travelled much, but formed intimate friendships outside his own country, and when he and his wife lived in Florence it was not as strangers and sojourners. Their poems reflect their sympathy with the national life about them. For this freedom from provincialism, as well as for some other kindred qualities, he doubtless owed much thanks to his education, which was remarkable for its appropriateness to his genius. He was not machine made.

In yet another and a more important characteristic he was in harmony with the most modern developments. His dramatic bent was unseasonable in the middle years of this century. English literature had turned its back on the theatre, in spite of Macreadys and Kembles. Not only so, but its tendencies were non-dramatic. Scenes may of course be found in the works of the great novelists of the period which stand in contradiction to this. But all the same the tendency was towards a gentle development of plot and character, an absence of central situations, of crucial moments in the affairs and minds of men: that is, towards the non-dramatic. Browning instinctively turned towards the stage. He did not succeed there, yet one cannot but think that had circumstances encouraged the clever young man to go on writing stage-plays, he would eventually have learned the business. There is nothing to regret in the fact that he did not. His genius found for itself the most full and fitting expression. Through the plays, the Dramatic Romances and Lyrics, it swept on to that Dramatic Epic of *The Ring and the Book*, which perhaps most perfectly embodied it. The plan of *The Ring and the Book* grew so naturally out of the documents on which it was founded and his own habitual manner of writing, that probably he himself was hardly conscious of its originality—of its excellence as a device for breaking the monotony of a long poem. The brilliant Introduction tells the facts of the story with a lucidity to which he did not always attain. By thus on the threshold revealing his whole plot, he at once asserts and vindicates his old belief in the interest of the story of souls; for no one would wish it otherwise. Then at the touch of the magician's wand arise out of their dust the "hearts that beat hard," the brains that "ticked two centuries since." All Rome is there, Arezzo too, yet the plan of the poem permits the principal figures to stand out clear against that crowded background. They re-act

dramatically upon each other, yet they are more complete than they could be in a play, where much must be left to conjecture. Long as it is, it is seldom long-winded. When it is, the remedy is plainly in the reader's own hands; another virtue of the plan. General practice has long suppressed Doctor Bottinius, and many persons think they can do without Tertium Quid; but this is not universal. At any rate it is possible without these to realise the rest; the pathetic figure of Pompilia, the wise great Pope, the philoprogenitive Dominus Hyacinthus, and Guido couched in his dungeon like a wolf at bay.

This great poem, which touches the high-water mark of Browning's genius, received at once its meed of praise. He had been ignored, he had been ridiculed, and now a reaction set in. The little band of Browning enthusiasts rapidly increased to a multitude, till at length he became a fashion. His very faults were glorified, and too much attention bestowed on such tentative and immature work as *Sordello*. There were many people to whom an obscure passage in Browning gave the amusement of an acrostic, *plus* the pleasures of intellectuality. Thus his obscurity was as much exaggerated by his admirers as by his opponents. Sometimes that obscurity may be justified by his own belief—a belief on which he did not always act—that poetry should suggest trains of thought rather than carry them out. At others it results from a real failure to crystallise a thought, or again from a kind of overwhelming of his powers of expression by the hurrying crowd of his ideas. But modern life is crowded and hurrying too. Already what may be called the acrostic interest in Browning is on the wane. As a fashion it needs must go. But besides the literary modists, there are in every generation the lovers of literature. To these we may leave in all confidence the works of Robert Browning, sure that they cannot miss seeing the treasure of true if alloyed gold that lies there; sure too that they will understand, as we cannot understand, how to send

> a spirt
> O' the proper fiery acid o'er its face;
> And forth the alloy unfastened flies in fume,
> While, self-sufficient now, the shape remains,
> The rondure brave, the lilied loveliness,
> Gold as it was, is, shall be evermore.

MARGARET L. WOODS.

How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix

I

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

II

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place:
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew, and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half chime,
So, Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

IV

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray;

V

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

VI

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault 's not in her,
We 'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

VII

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

VIII

"How they 'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

IX

Then I cast loose my buff-coat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

X

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

(1838.)

PIPPA'S SONG

The year 's at the spring,
And day 's at the morn;
Morning 's at seven;
The hill-side 's dew-pearled;
The lark 's on the wing;
The snail 's on the thorn:
God 's in his heaven—
All 's right with the world!

(1841.)

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH

ROME, 15—

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What 's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world 's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;

And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit on the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam 's sure to lurk:
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death! Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten figleaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli.*
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?

The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There 's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
—That 's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals, and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,

And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death: ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
—Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

(1845.)

The Lost Leader

I

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
  Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
  Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
  So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
  Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
  Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
  Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
  Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
  —He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

II

We shall march prospering,—not thro' his presence;
  Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
  Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire.
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
  One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devil's-triumph and sorrow for angels,
  One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
  There will be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
  Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
  Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
  Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

(1845.)

David Singing Before Saul

(From *Saul*)

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered: and sparkles 'gan dart
From the jewels that woke in his turban, at once with a start,
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.
So the head: but the body still moved not, still hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it unchecked,
As I sang,—

IX

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigour! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou kiss the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly departed, and hear her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness 'Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand thro' a lifetime, and all was for best?'
Then they sung thro' their tears in strong triumph, not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working whence grew
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit strained true:

And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of wonder and hope,
Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope,—
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine;
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labour and lets the gold go)
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning them,—all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—King Saul!"

X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,—heart, hand, harp and voice,
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bidding rejoice
Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as when, dare I say,
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains through its array.
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—"Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was struck by his name.
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone
A year's snow bound about for a breastplate,—leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet,
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold:
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest—all hail, there they are!
—Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardours of summer. One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled
At the King's self left standing before me, released and aware.

(1845.)

Home Thoughts, from Abroad

I

Oh, to be in England
Now that April 's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

II

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That 's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And, though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

(1845.)

Love among the Ruins

I

Where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles,
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay,
(So they say)
Of our country's very capital, its prince,
Ages since,
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

II

Now—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed
Twelve abreast.

III

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

IV

Now,—The single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

V

And I know, while thus the quiet-coloured eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished grey
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

VI

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

VII

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise, and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

(1855.)

Incident of the French Camp

I

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

II

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall,—"
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

III

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

IV

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
We 've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal 's in the market-place,
And you 'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

V

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes.
"You 're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

Two in the Campagna

I

I wonder do you feel to-day
As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

II

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
Has tantalized me many times,
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

III

Help me to hold it! First it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
Some old tomb's ruin: yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

IV

Where one small orange cup amassed
Five beetles,—blind and green they grope,
Among the honey-meal: and last,
Everywhere on the grassy slope,
I traced it. Hold it fast!

V

The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

VI

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting nature have her way
While heaven looks from its towers!

VII

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above!
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

VIII

I would that you were all to me,
You that are just so much, no more.
Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!
Where does the fault lie? What the core
O' the wound, since wound must be?

IX

I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs,—your part my part
In life, for good and ill.

X

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth,—I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak—
Then the good minute goes.

XI

Already how am I so far
Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star?

XII

Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again.
The old trick! Only I discern—
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

(1855.)

Up at a Villa—Down in the City

(As distinguished by an Italian Person of quality)

I

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

II

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

III

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair 's turned wool.

IV

But the city, oh the city—the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there 's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;

You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

V

What of a villa? though winter be over in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights:
You've the brown ploughed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint grey olive-trees.

VI

Is it better in May, I ask you? You 've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce arisen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

VII

Is it ever hot in the square? There 's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foam-bows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

VIII

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

IX

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there 's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint Jerome and Cicero,
"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhyming,) "the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession! our Lady borne smiling and smart,
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it 's the greatest pleasure in life.

X

But bless you, it 's dear—it 's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still—ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow candles;

One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention
of scandals:
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

(1855.)

May and Death

I

I wish that when you died last May,
Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of spring's delightful things;
Ay, and, for me, the fourth part too.

II

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps!
There must be many a pair of friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
Moon-births and the long evening-ends.

III

So, for their sake, be May still May!
Let their new time, as mine of old,
Do all it did for me: I bid
Sweet sights and songs throng manifold.

IV

Only, one little sight, one plant,
Woods have in May, that starts up green
Save a sole streak which, so to speak,
Is spring's blood, spilt its leaves between,—

V

That, they might spare; a certain wood
Might miss the plant; their loss were small:
But I,—whene'er the leaf grows there,
Its drop comes from my heart, that 's all.

(1857.)

Prospice

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle 's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute 's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

(1861.)

Rabbi Ben Ezra

I

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all nor be afraid!"

II

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

III

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

IV

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

V

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide,
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

VI

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

VII

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

VIII

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

IX

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn?"

X

Not once beat "Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt do!"

XI

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

XII

Let us not always say
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

XIII

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.

XIV

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armour to indue.

XV

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby:
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

XVI

For, note when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the grey:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

XVII

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

XVIII

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

XIX

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedest age: wait death nor be afraid!

XX

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou call'st thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

XXI

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

XXII

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

XXIII

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

XXIV

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account:
All instincts immature
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

XXV

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped:
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

XXVI

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound
When the wind makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

XXVII

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

XXVIII

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

XXIX

What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

XXX

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel?

XXXI

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men!
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I,—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

XXXII

So, take and use Thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

(1864.)

CONFESSIONS

I

What is he buzzing in my ears?
"Now that I come to die,
Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"
Ah, reverend sir, not I!

II

What I viewed there once, what I view again
Where the physic bottles stand
On the table's edge,—is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

III

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry
O'er the garden-wall: is the curtain blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

IV

To mine, it serves for the old June weather
Blue above lane and wall;
And that farthest bottle labelled "Ether"
Is the house o'ertopping all.

V

At a terrace, somewhere near the stopper,
They watched for me, one June,
A girl: I know, sir, it 's improper,
My poor mind 's out of tune.

VI

Only, there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except:
They styled their house "The Lodge."

VII

What right had a lounger up their lane?
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help,—their eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

VIII

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic, there,
By the rim of the bottle labelled "Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair,

IX

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas,
We loved, sir—used to meet:
How sad and bad and mad it was—
But then, how it was sweet!

(1864.)

The Ring and the Book

(Dedication)

O lyric love, half angel and half bird
And all a wonder and a wild desire,—
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face,—
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart—
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their blue,
And bared them of the glory—to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die,—
This is the same voice: can thy soul know change?
Hail then, and harken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand—
That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile:
—Never conclude, but raising hand and head
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on,—so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud,
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall!

(1868.)

The Householder

(Epilogue to *Fifine at the Fair*)

I

Savage I was sitting in my house, late, lone:
Dreary, weary with the long day's work:
Head of me, heart of me, stupid as a stone:
Tongue-tied now, now blaspheming like a Turk;
When, in a moment, just a knock, call, cry,
Half a pang and all a rapture, there again were we!—
"What, and is it really you again?" quoth I:
"I again, what else did you expect?" quoth She.

II

"Never mind, hie away from this old house—
Every crumbling brick embrowned with sin and shame!
Quick, in its corners ere certain shapes arouse!
Let them—every devil of the night—lay claim,
Make and mend, or rap and rend, for me! Goodbye!
God be their guard from disturbance at their glee,
Till, crash, down comes the carcass in a heap!" quoth I:
"Nay, but there's a decency required!" quoth She.

III

"Ah, but if you knew how time has dragged, days, nights!
All the neighbour-talk with man and maid—such men!
All the fuss and trouble of street-sounds, window-sights:
All the worry of flapping door and echoing roof; and then
All the fancies . . . Who were they had leave, dared try
Darker arts that almost struck despair in me?
If you knew but how I dwelt down here!" quoth I:
"And was I so better off up there?" quoth She.

IV

"Help and get it over! *Reunited to his wife*
(How draw up the paper lets the parish-people know?)
Lies M., or N., departed from this life,
Day the this or that, month and year the so and so.
What i' the way of final flourish? Prose, verse? Try!
Affliction sore long time he bore, or, what is it to be?
Till God did please to grant him ease. Do end!" quoth I:
"I end with—Love is all and Death is nought!" quoth She.

(1872.)

Epilogue to Asolando

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless did I drivel
—Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

(1889.)

MATTHEW ARNOLD

[ELDEST son of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby; born Dec. 24, 1822, at Laleham, near Staines; educated at Winchester, Rugby, and Balliol College, Oxford. Won the Newdigate Prize, 1843, with a poem on "Cromwell." Published *The Strayed Reveller, and other Poems.* By A., 1849; *Empedocles on Etna, and other Poems* (same signature), 1852; *Poems, First Series*, 1853; *Poems, Second Series*, 1855. Elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford, 1857; re-elected, 1862 till 1867. It was as professorial lectures that his chief critical essays were first given to the world. He published *Merope, a Tragedy*, 1858; *New Poems*, 1867; and issued his collected poems in 1877, 1881, and 1885. His numerous prose writings were published between 1853 and 1888. He died suddenly, at Liverpool, on April 15, 1888.]

It is with a sad appropriateness that we include in the "definitive" edition of *The English Poets* the poems of the eminent writer to whom we owe the General Introduction to the volumes.[1] The fourteen years which have elapsed since their first publication have brought to a close the life of many a great Englishman, and to the poets they have been especially fatal. Rossetti went first, then Arnold, then his seniors, Browning and Tennyson. Sharing as Arnold did the greatness of the last two, there is a first and great distinction to be noticed between them and him. They were poets by profession, so to speak; they lived for poetry, and went on producing it regularly till the end of their long lives. He, on the other hand, was a busy public official, and from the year 1851 till his retirement from the Education Department in 1885, all the time that he could give to literature was saved from an exhausting daily round of work. Again, his literary vocation was not all poetical, as theirs was. It was as a critic that he was, in his life-time, most widely known, and that he had the most immediate effect upon his generation. But if the stream of his verse is scanty; if his three volumes look slight beside the sixteen volumes of Browning; if, during a wide space of his middle life he almost ceased to write poetry—on the other hand, how

[1] Written in 1894.

little there is that one could wish away! A certain largeness of production is undoubtedly necessary before one can admit the claim of an artist to the highest place; but at the same time, excess of production is a commoner fault with poets than its contrary is. Instances of an over-chastened Muse like Gray's, or in a less degree, like Arnold's, are comparatively rare among true poets. While of Dryden, of Wordsworth, of Byron, more than half might well be spared, there is scarcely anything in Arnold's volumes—except perhaps *Balder Dead*—that has not a distinct value of its own, scarcely anything that ought not to be preserved. Of no poet is it more difficult to make a satisfying selection; and we may echo in serious earnest the answer that he used laughingly to make to the friends who complained that this or that favourite was excluded from the poems chosen by him for the Golden Treasury volume—"If I had had my own way I should have included everything!"

Matthew Arnold's writings, in poetry and in prose, are their own commentary; at least, even those who knew him best can say little about their genesis or their sources beyond what they themselves convey. No man of letters was ever more genial, or more affectionate to his friends, and yet none ever told less, even in intimate private letters, about his literary work or about those inmost thoughts of his which from time to time found expression in poetry. As a rule, he composed "in his head," like Wordsworth, and wrote down his verse on any scraps of paper that came handy; whereas his prose was always written methodically, in the early morning hours. He had the habit, almost the passion, of destroying whatever manuscripts had served their purpose; and at his death scarcely any scraps of his writings were found, and scarcely any of the multitudes of letters that he had received. Yet his letters to his family and friends remain, of course; and it is to be hoped that before long we shall have Mr. George Russell's selection from them. This, though it will contain but few actual references to the poems, will naturally throw light upon them, and will show, as they do, how early his mind reached its maturity. The first little volume of poems, it will be remembered, was published in 1849, when Arnold was twenty-seven; but five or six years before that he had written letters containing judgments which he would have felt and expressed in just the same way twenty years later. From the beginning, in verse as in his intimate prose, Arnold gave evidence of a singularly clear, open mind, "playing

freely" upon all the aspects and all the problems of life as they presented themselves to him in turn. That was his natural endowment; but from the beginning, also, he set himself to enrich it by the persistent study of "the best that is known and thought in the world," as taught by the great writers of all times. Among these writers, the Greeks came first, and their influence penetrated deepest. Quite early in his poetical history he wrote his memorable sonnet "To a Friend," in answer to his question, "Who prop, in these bad days, my mind?"; and the answer that he gave was to name two Greek poets and a Greek moralist, Homer, Sophocles, Epictetus. Companions of his youth, these influences remained with him to the end. One of the most surprising qualities of Arnold's mind was his power, in spite of the complexity of his own culture—in spite of the Hebraistic elements in it, and of the cross-influences of his multifarious reading—his power of assimilating the Greek spirit in its simplicity, and of presenting ideas, characters, images, with the clearness of Phidian sculpture or of Sophoclean verse. None was more conscious than he of "this disease of modern life, with its sick hurry, its divided aims"—but none was less personally infected by it. Lucidity, the subject of one of the latest and most brilliant of his public addresses, was his characteristic from the first; a "sad lucidity" perhaps, if we are to trust the bulk of his poems, but one that was never clouded by confusion. This "critic clearness" was doubtless a gift of nature to him, but it was developed by a study of Greek literature which, with him, did not end when he left the University. Why, especially after the great success of his Oxford lecture on Theocritus ("Pagan and Mediæval Religious Sentiment")—why he never carried out his scheme of a volume on the Greek poets, his friends never quite understood. He was not, indeed, a professed scholar, in the school and college sense of the word, but no writer of his day could have written so adequately of the poetical qualities of Sophocles and Pindar, just as none has written so suggestively of translating Homer.

Like Goethe, Arnold assimilated Greek forms in many of his writings. "Even after his master," wrote Mr. Swinburne in 1867, "this disciple of Sophocles holds his high place; he has matched against the Attic of the gods this Hyperborean dialect of ours, and has not earned the doom of Marsyas." Such fragments as those from a *Deianira* and an *Antigone* are close imitations, while the lovely poem of *The Strayed Reveller* is as reminiscent of Greek

form as of Greek matter. The special and characteristic Arnold metre, the unrhymed, lilting, quasi-anapæstic measure of *Heine's Grave* and *Rugby Chapel*, is a sort of adaptation, too, from Greek choric metres. It must not indeed be supposed, wrote Arnold in the preface to *Merope*, "that these last [he is speaking of the choruses there, but the words have a wider application] are the reproduction of any Greek choric measures. So to adapt Greek measures to English verse is impossible: what I have done is to try to follow rhythms which produced on my own feeling a similar impression to that produced on it by the rhythms of Greek choric poetry." The result is the metre of which we have spoken—Greek and yet not Greek; like the Attic chorus, but very different.

But just as there is a difference between the Attic and the Hyperborean in form, so there is in matter. Strongly as Arnold's view of the world, his "criticism of life," was influenced by Greek poetry and philosophy, there is a great, an essential distinction between him and his models. How comes it, people often ask, that he, over whose conversation, and over most of whose prose work, there played a delightful and a perpetual humour, should in his verse be so uniformly grave, so far removed from humour? How comes it that in his poetry he brings, not once nor twice, but perpetually, "the eternal note of sadness in"? The truth is, that verse was for him, except in two or three of the poems with which he amused some of his latest days, the expression of his gravest self, and his most abiding thought. And here there was, as it were, a permanent *nostalgie* of a simpler and earlier age; a pained sense that the modern mind, delight as it may in the forms that ancient art has left us, can never re-create for itself the moral atmosphere in which that art had its origin. Hence the almost tragic note that sounds through so much of Arnold's poetry; the sad reflexion that he, whom nature and training had endowed with Hellenic clearness of vision and utterance, should have to express the thoughts of an age in which all is confusion and perplexity.

Hence, again, his fondness for certain types, repeating one another to a certain extent: Empedocles, who in his inability to live either for himself or in the world, plunges into the crater of Etna; the Scholar Gypsy, who seeks refuge among a primitive race from the torment of civilization; Obermann, retreating to the Swiss mountains to contemplate life and his own soul. That so much of Arnold's poetry is given up to this class of subjects and of thoughts is largely due to the fact that his early manhood, the time when his

poetic production was most active, lay in those years of "storm and stress," 1840 to 1850—the years of Chartism, of the "Oxford Movement," of continental revolution, of railway expansion, the years of Carlyle's greatest activity, and of George Sand's greatest effectiveness.

We have said that in counting up the literary influences that worked upon Arnold, the chief place must be given to the Greeks. He cared much less for the Latin than for the Greek writers, and was less touched by the charm of Virgil than Tennyson was; the lines to "The Mantovano," indeed, would have found as little response in him as would the alcaics "To Milton." In an Oxford lecture, famous at the time, but never printed, he called Lucretius "morbid"; another lecture, on Propertius, he often announced but never delivered. Of the author of *Literature and Dogma* it need hardly be said that the Bible, considered both as literature and as a storehouse of profound reflexions upon human life, had a strong and permanent influence upon him. Some of the Fathers touched him a good deal; he studied St. Augustine's *Confessions* and the *Imitation*, and felt their power and charm; and the Introduction to these volumes of ours has put on record his view of Dante, that crown and flower of the mediæval Italian mind. But none of these were so much to him as the moderns—Shakespeare and Montaigne in their degree, Wordsworth and Byron of course, but most of all Goethe and some French writers of his own generation. One of his most treasured books was a fine copy of the thirty-volume edition of Goethe, which he had read through and assimilated as he assimilated the Greek classics in his boyhood. The "wide and luminous view" of the writer whom Arnold called "the greatest poet of his time, the greatest critic of all times," had an extraordinary attraction for him. Sanity, the absence of caprice—these were to him the essential things; he found them in the Greeks, in Goethe, and in the great French tradition from Molière to Leconte de Lisle, from Montaigne to Sainte-Beuve. It was because he did not find them in Victor Hugo that he could never bring himself to join the body of that poet's votaries, and that he once said to the present writer, "there is more in the one little volume of André Chénier than in the whole forty volumes of Hugo."

It is hoped that the following selections, though far too brief to represent fully work of a poet so rich in thought as Arnold was, will be found to contain the most perfect, and many of the most suggestive and stimulating, of his poems. Many old favourites,

indeed, will be missed altogether, and in two or three instances—not more—extracts have been given where the complete poems might have been expected or wished for. From a long narrative poem such as *Sohrab and Rustum*, this choice of a mere fragment was of course inevitable; and the Editor, after much consideration, has decided to exclude the whole of the beautiful early poem *Resignation*, except the famous page about the Poet. Arnold himself, though he never moved away from the conclusions of a poem which taught that the secret of life was "not joy but peace," came to regard it as faulty in workmanship, diffuse, and immature. One of the most interesting of his poems, speaking biographically, the *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*, has also been shut out, on the ground of a certain monotony in its composition; and the same fate, merely for reasons of space, has befallen that vivid summary, as it may be called, of the spiritual history of Europe, *Obermann Once More*. We have printed *Thyrsis*, but have been forced to omit the poem which is, as it were, the introduction to it, *The Scholar Gypsy*, though it is one of the most characteristic of all, and though the long simile with which it concludes is as famous as anything the author ever wrote. Again, we have been forced to limit ourselves to one small fragment of *Empedocles on Etna*, the Song of Callicles, and have had to exclude the splendid monologue of the philosopher. Arnold for many years condemned it himself, and withdrew from publication the whole poem for the reasons which he gave in the celebrated Preface of 1853; but reflexion and the persuasions of his friends led him to cancel the sentence of banishment, and *Empedocles* reappeared in the "New Poems" of 1867. Since that time it has held its place in every edition, and the opinion of all readers of poetry has confirmed the inclusion of it, however true may have been the poet's feeling that it was wanting in dramatic action, and was, for enjoyment, too monotonously grave.

EDITOR.

To a Friend

Who prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind?—
He much, the old man, who, clearest-soul'd of men,
Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen,[1]
And Tmolus hill, and Smyrna bay, though blind.

Much he, whose friendship I not long since won
That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son
Clear'd Rome of what most shamed him. But be his

My special thanks, whose even-balanced soul,
From first youth tested up to extreme old age,
Business could not make dull, nor passion wild;

Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole;
The mellow glory of the Attic stage,
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.

Shakespeare

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask—Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,

Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foil'd searching of mortality;

[1] The name Europe (Εὐρώπη, *the wide prospect*) probably describes the appearance of the European coast to the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor opposite. The name Asia, again, comes, it has been thought, from the muddy fens of the rivers of Asia Minor, such as the Cayster or Maeander, which struck the imagination of the Greeks living near them. (*Author's Note.*)

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
Didst tread on earth unguess'd at.—Better so!

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

Requiescat

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

Human Life

What mortal, when he saw,
Life's voyage done, his heavenly Friend,
Could ever yet dare tell him fearlessly:
"I have kept uninfringed my nature's law;
The inly-written chart thou gavest me,
To guide me, I have steer'd by to the end"?

Ah! let us make no claim,
On life's incognisable sea,
To too exact a steering of our way;
Let us not fret and fear to miss our aim,
If some fair coast have lured us to make stay,
Or some friend hail'd us to keep company.

Ay! we would each fain drive
At random, and not steer by rule.
Weakness! and worse, weakness bestow'd in vain.
Winds from our side the unsuiting consort rive,
We rush by coasts where we had lief remain;
Man cannot, though he would, live chance's fool.

No! as the foaming swath
Of torn-up water, on the main,
Falls heavily away with long-drawn roar
On either side the black deep-furrow'd path
Cut by an onward-labouring vessel's prore,
And never touches the ship-side again;

Even so we leave behind,
As, charter'd by some unknown Powers,
We stem across the sea of life by night,
The joys which were not for our use design'd;—
The friends to whom we had no natural right,
The homes that were not destined to be ours.

[From *Resignation*]

The poet, to whose mighty heart
Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart,
Subdues that energy to scan
Not his own course, but that of man.
Though he move mountains, though his day
Be pass'd on the proud heights of sway,
Though he hath loosed a thousand chains,
Though he hath borne immortal pains,
Action and suffering though he know—
He hath not lived, if he lives so.

He sees, in some great-historied land,
A ruler of the people stand,
Sees his strong thought in fiery flood
Roll through the heaving multitude,
Exults—yet for no moment's space
Envies the all-regarded place.
Beautiful eyes meet his—and he
Bears to admire uncravingly;
They pass—he, mingled with the crowd,
Is in their far-off triumphs proud.
From some high station he looks down,
At sunset, on a populous town;
Surveys each happy group, which fleets,
Toil ended, through the shining streets,
Each with some errand of its own—
And does not say: *I am alone.*
He sees the gentle stir of birth
When morning purifies the earth;
He leans upon a gate and sees
The pastures, and the quiet trees.
Low, woody hill, with gracious bound,
Folds the still valley almost round;
The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,
Is answer'd from the depth of dawn;
In the hedge straggling to the stream,
Pale, dew-drench'd, half-shut roses gleam;
But, where the farther side slopes down,
He sees the drowsy new-waked clown
In his white quaint-embroider'd frock
Make, whistling, tow'rd his mist-wreathed flock—
Slowly, behind his heavy tread,
The wet, flower'd grass heaves up its head.
Lean'd on his gate, he gazes—tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years.
Before him he sees life unroll,
A placid and continuous whole—
That general life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace;
That life, whose dumb wish is not miss'd
If birth proceeds, if things subsist;

The life of plants, and stones, and rain,
The life he craves—if not in vain
Fate gave, what chance shall not control,
His sad lucidity of soul.

[From *Sohrab and Rustum*]

He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listen'd, plunged in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all—
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms—
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem'd he; yet he listen'd, plunged in thought
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore
At the full moon; tears gather'd in his eyes;
For he remember'd his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds—so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;
And that old king, her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time—
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,

Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass—so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said:—
"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved.
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false—thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son; one child he had—
But one—a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."
But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die—
But first he would convince his stubborn foe;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—
"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud;
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,

And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks;
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and loved—
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand and said:—
"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry:
O boy—thy father!—and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,—
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him; and he clutch'd his sword,
To draw it, and for ever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said:—
"Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it! but fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.

But let us speak no more of this! I find
My father; let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: *My son!*
Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be."
So said he, and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked the sand,
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:—
"Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
Or ere they brought thy master to this field!"
But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said:—
"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,
And said: *O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!*—but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,

Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."

Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd:—
"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"

But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied:—
"Desire not that, my father! thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age;
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me entreat for them; what have they done?
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all.
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry:
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!
And I be not forgotten in my grave."

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:—
"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,

And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all that I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have—
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say: *O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day,
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."

And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said:—
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."

He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took

The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flow'd with the stream;—all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye; his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay—
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame,
Convulsed him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.
So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon;—he flow'd

Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

The Forsaken Merman

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear,
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!

The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate, on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea;
She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.

'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,

And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children;
Come children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When guests shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.

We will gaze from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.
Singing: "There dwells a loved one
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

Austerity of Poetry

That son of Italy who tried to blow,[1]
Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred song,
In his light youth amid a festal throng
Sate with his bride to see a public show.

Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow
Youth like a star; and what to youth belong—
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong.
A prop gave way! crash fell a platform! lo,

'Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay!
Shuddering, they drew her garments off—and found
A robe of sackcloth next the smooth, white skin.

Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse! young, gay,
Radiant, adorn'd outside; a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within.

To Marguerite

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

[1] Giacopone di Todi.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour—

Oh! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the watery plain—
Oh might our marges meet again!

Who order'd, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd?
Who renders vain their deep desire?—
A God, a God their severance ruled!
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.

The Strayed Reveller

THE PORTICO OF CIRCE'S PALACE. EVENING

A Youth. Circe

The Youth

Faster, faster,
O Circe, Goddess,
Let the wild, thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms,
Sweep through my soul!

Thou standest, smiling
Down on me! thy right arm,
Lean'd up against the column there,

Props thy soft cheek;
Thy left holds, hanging loosely,
The deep cup, ivy-cinctured,
I held but now.

Is it, then, evening
So soon? I see the night-dews,
Cluster'd in thick beads, dim
The agate brooch-stones
On thy white shoulder;
The cool night-wind, too,
Blows through the portico,
Stirs thy hair, Goddess,
Waves thy white robe!

Circe

Whence art thou, sleeper?

The Youth

When the white dawn first
Through the rough fir-planks
Of my hut, by the chestnuts,
Up at the valley-head,
Came breaking, Goddess!
I sprang up, I threw round me
My dappled fawn-skin;
Passing out, from the wet turf,
Where they lay, by the hut door,
I snatch'd up my vine-crown, my fir-staff,
All drench'd in dew—
Came swift down to join
The rout early gather'd
In the town, round the temple,
Iacchus' white fane
On yonder hill.

Quick I pass'd, following
The wood-cutters' cart-track
Down the dark valley;—I saw

On my left, through the beeches,
Thy palace, Goddess,
Smokeless, empty!
Trembling, I enter'd; beheld
The court all silent,
The lions sleeping,
On the altar this bowl.
I drank, Goddess!
And sank down here, sleeping,
On the steps of thy portico.

Circe

Foolish boy! Why tremblest thou?
Thou lovest it, then, my wine?
Wouldst more of it? See, how glows,
Through the delicate, flush'd marble,
The red, creaming liquor,
Strown with dark seeds!
Drink, then! I chide thee not,
Deny thee not my bowl.
Come, stretch forth thy hand, then—so!
Drink—drink again!

The Youth

Thanks, gracious one!
Ah, the sweet fumes again!
More soft, ah me,
More subtle-winding
Than Pan's flute-music!
Faint—faint! Ah me,
Again the sweet sleep!

Circe

Hist! Thou—within there!
Come forth, Ulysses!
Art tired with hunting?
While we range the woodland,
See what the day brings.

Ulysses

Ever new magic!
Hast thou then lured hither,
Wonderful Goddess, by thy art,
The young, languid-eyed Ampelus,
Iacchus' darling—
Or some youth beloved of Pan,
Of Pan and the Nymphs?
That he sits, bending downward
His white, delicate neck
To the ivy-wreathed marge
Of thy cup; the bright, glancing vine-leaves
That crown his hair,
Falling forward, mingling
With the dark ivy-plants—
His fawn-skin, half untied,
Smear'd with red wine-stains? Who is he,
That he sits, overweigh'd
By fumes of wine and sleep,
So late, in thy portico?
What youth, Goddess,—what guest
Of Gods or mortals?

Circe

Hist! he wakes!
I lured him not hither, Ulysses.
Nay, ask him!

The Youth

Who speaks? Ah, who comes forth
To thy side, Goddess, from within?
How shall I name him?
This spare, dark-featured,
Quick-eyed stranger?
Ah, and I see too
His sailor's bonnet,
His short coat, travel-tarnish'd,
With one arm bare!—
Art thou not he, whom fame

This long time rumours
The favour'd guest of Circe, brought by the waves?
Art thou he, stranger?
The wise Ulysses,
Laertes' son?

Ulysses

I am Ulysses.
And thou, too, sleeper?
Thy voice is sweet.
It may be thou hast follow'd
Through the islands some divine bard,
By age taught many things,
Age and the Muses;
And heard him delighting
The chiefs and people
In the banquet, and learn'd his songs,
Of Gods and Heroes,
Of war and arts,
And peopled cities,
Inland, or built
By the grey sea.—If so, then hail!
I honour and welcome thee.

The Youth

The Gods are happy.
They turn on all sides
Their shining eyes,
And see below them
The earth and men.

They see Tiresias
Sitting, staff in hand,
On the warm, grassy
Asopus bank,
His robe drawn over
His old, sightless head,
Revolving inly
The doom of Thebes.

They see the Centaurs
In the upper glens
Of Pelion, in the streams,
Where red-berried ashes fringe
The clear-brown shallow pools,
With streaming flanks, and heads
Rear'd proudly, snuffing
The mountain wind.

They see the Indian
Drifting, knife in hand,
His frail boat moor'd to
A floating isle thick-matted
With large-leaved, low-creeping melon-plants,
And the dark cucumber.
He reaps, and stows them,
Drifting—drifting;—round him,
Round his green harvest-plot,
Flow the cool lake-waves,
The mountains ring them.

They see the Scythian
On the wide stepp, unharnessing
His wheel'd house at noon.
He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal—
Mares' milk, and bread
Baked on the embers;—all around
The boundless, waving grass-plains stretch, thick-starr'd
With saffron and the yellow hollyhock
And flag-leaved iris-flowers.
Sitting in his cart
He makes his meal; before him, for long miles,
Alive with bright green lizards,
And the springing bustard-fowl,
The track, a straight black line,
Furrows the rich soil; here and there
Clusters of lonely mounds
Topp'd with rough-hewn,
Grey, rain-blear'd statues, overpeer
The sunny waste.

They see the ferry
On the broad, clay-laden
Lone Chorasmian stream;—thereon,
With snort and strain,
Two horses, strongly swimming, tow
The ferry-boat, with woven ropes
To either bow
Firm harness'd by the mane; a chief,
With shout and shaken spear,
Stands at the prow, and guides them; but astern
The cowering merchants, in long robes,
Sit pale beside their weal
Of silk-bales and of balsam-drops,
Of gold and ivory,
Of turquoise-earth and amethyst,
Jasper and chalcedony,
And milk-barr'd onyx-stones.
The loaded boat swings groaning
In the yellow eddies;
The Gods behold them.
They see the Heroes
Sitting in the dark ship
On the foamless, long-heaving
Violet sea,
At sunset nearing
The Happy Islands.

These things, Ulysses,
The wise bards also
Behold and sing.
But oh, what labour!
O prince, what pain!

They too can see
Tiresias;—but the Gods,
Who give them vision,
Added this law:
That they should bear too
His groping blindness,
His dark foreboding,
His scorn'd white hairs;

Bear Hera's anger
Through a life lengthen'd
To seven ages.

They see the Centaurs
On Pelion;—then they feel,
They too, the maddening wine
Swell their large veins to bursting; in wild pain
They feel the biting spears
Of the grim Lapithæ, and Theseus, drive,
Drive crashing through their bones; they feel
High on a jutting rock in the red stream
Alcmena's dreadful son
Ply his bow;—such a price
The Gods exact for song:
To become what we sing.

They see the Indian
On his mountain lake; but squalls
Make their skiff reel, and worms
In the unkind spring have gnawn
Their melon-harvest to the heart.—They see
The Scythian; but long frosts
Parch them in winter-time on the bare stepp,
Till they too fade like grass; they crawl
Like shadows forth in spring.

They see the merchants
On the Oxus stream;—but care
Must visit first them too, and make them pale.
Whether, through whirling sand,
A cloud of desert robber-horse have burst
Upon their caravan; or greedy kings,
In the wall'd cities the way passes through,
Crush'd them with tolls; or fever-airs,
On some great river's marge,
Mown them down, far from home.

They see the Heroes
Near harbour;—but they share
Their lives, and former violent toil in Thebes,

Seven-gated Thebes, or Troy;
Or where the echoing oars
Of Argo first
Startled the unknown sea.

The old Silenus
Came, lolling in the sunshine,
From the dewy forest-coverts
This way, at noon.
Sitting by me, while his Fauns
Down at the water-side
Sprinkled and smoothed
His drooping garland,
He told me these things.

But I, Ulysses,
Sitting on the warm steps,
Looking over the valley,
All day long, have seen,
Without pain, without labour,
Sometimes a wild-hair'd Mænad—
Sometimes a Faun with torches—
And sometimes, for a moment,
Passing through the dark stems
Flowing-robed, the beloved,
The desired, the divine,
Beloved Iacchus.

Ah, cool night-wind, tremulous stars!
Ah, glimmering water,
Fitful earth-murmur,
Dreaming woods!
Ah, golden-hair'd, strangely smiling Goddess,
And thou, proved, much enduring,
Wave-toss'd Wanderer!
Who can stand still?
Ye fade, ye swim, ye waver before me—
The cup again!

Faster, faster,
O Circe, Goddess,

Let the wild, thronging train,
The bright procession
Of eddying forms,
Sweep through my soul!

Callicles' Song

[From *Empedocles on Etna*]

Through the black, rushing smoke-bursts,
Thick breaks the red flame;
All Etna heaves fiercely
Her forest-clothed frame.

Not here, O Apollo!
Are haunts meet for thee.
But, where Helicon breaks down
In cliff to the sea,

Where the moon-silver'd inlets
Send far their light voice
Up the still vale of Thisbe,
O speed, and rejoice!

On the sward at the cliff-top
Lie strewn the white flocks,
On the cliff-side the pigeons
Roost deep in the rocks.

In the moonlight the shepherds,
Soft lull'd by the rills,
Lie wrapt in their blankets
Asleep on the hills.

—What forms are these coming
So white through the gloom?
What garments out-glistening
The gold-flower'd broom?

What sweet-breathing presence
Out-perfumes the thyme?
What voices enrapture
The night's balmy prime?—

'Tis Apollo comes leading
His choir, the Nine.
—The leader is fairest,
But all are divine.

They are lost in the hollows!
They stream up again!
What seeks on this mountain
The glorified train?—

They bathe on this mountain,
In the spring by their road;
Then on to Olympus,
Their endless abode.

—Whose praise do they mention?
Of what is it told?—
What will be for ever;
What was from of old.

First hymn they the Father
Of all things; and then,
The rest of immortals,
The action of men.

The day in his hotness
The strife with the palm;
The night in her silence,
The stars in their calm.

Dover Beach

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd!
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Palladium

Set where the upper streams of Simois flow
Was the Palladium, high 'mid rock and wood;
And Hector was in Ilium, far below,
And fought, and saw it not—but there it stood!

It stood, and sun and moonshine rain'd their light
On the pure columns of its glen-built hall.
Backward and forward roll'd the waves of fight
Round Troy—but while this stood, Troy could not fall.

So, in its lovely moonlight, lives the soul.
Mountains surround it, and sweet virgin air;
Cold plashing, past it, crystal waters roll;
We visit it by moments, ah, too rare!

We shall renew the battle in the plain
To-morrow;—red with blood will Xanthus be;
Hector and Ajax will be there again,
Helen will come upon the wall to see.

Then we shall rust in shade, or shine in strife,
And fluctuate 'twixt blind hopes and blind despairs,
And fancy that we put forth all our life,
And never know how with the soul it fares.

Still doth the soul, from its lone fastness high
Upon our life a ruling effluence send.
And when it fails, fight as we will, we die;
And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end.

Morality

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight will'd
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
Not till the hours of light return
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask, how *she* view'd thy self-control,
Thy struggling, task'd morality—
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
"Ah, child!" she cries, "that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?

"There is no effort on *my* brow—
I do not strive, I do not weep;
I rush with the swift spheres and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once—but where?

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;
I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God."

Memorial Verses

April, 1850

Goethe in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.
But one such death remain'd to come;
The last poetic voice is dumb—
We stand to-day by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
We bow'd our head and held our breath.
He taught us little; but our soul
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.
With shivering heart the strife we saw
Of passion with eternal law;
And yet with reverential awe
We watch'd the fount of fiery life
Which served for that Titantic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said:
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
Physician of the iron age,
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear;
And struck his finger on the place,
And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*
He look'd on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power;
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
The turmoil of expiring life—

He said: *The end is everywhere,*
Art still has truth, take refuge there!
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow

Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth!—Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!
For never has such soothing voice
Been to your shadowy world convey'd,
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.
Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen—on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease;
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth return'd; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel;
Others will strengthen us to bear—
But who, ah! who, will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly—
But who, like him will put it by?

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
O Rotha, with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone.

Rugby Chapel

November, 1857

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn-evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent;—hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the school-room windows—but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah!
That word, *gloom*, to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigour, again;
In the gloom of November we pass'd
Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impair'd not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road

Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficient, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succourest!—this was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?—
Most men eddy about
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die—

Perish;—and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean, have swell'd,
Foam'd for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah, yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path—
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance!—but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breach'd
The track, the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep—the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin; alas,
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compress'd, we strain on,

On—and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs—
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripp'd, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing—to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honour'd and blest
By former ages, who else—
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see—
Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
Seem'd but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls temper'd with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God!—or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost—
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died!
See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending?—A God
Marshall'd them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
—Ah, keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;

Sole they shall stray; in the rocks
Stagger for ever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardour divine!
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave!
Order, courage, return.
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

THYRSIS

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend,*
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, *who died at Florence,* 1861.

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village-street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks—
Are ye too changed, ye hills?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days—
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames?—
This winter-eve is warm,
Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers!
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assay'd.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest

He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day—
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;

And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain!

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I?—
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We track'd the shy Thames shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass?—
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well!

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with grey;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;—
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
To the less practised eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet!—Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick! let me fly, and cross

Into yon farther field!—'Tis done; and see,
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there!—
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old!—
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
Neath the mild canopy of English air

That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemones in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold—
But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound;
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour!
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat—
It fail'd, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
—Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear;
Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.
Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

[ALFRED TENNYSON was born on Aug. 6, 1809, at Somersby Rectory, Lincolnshire. He was the third son of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, LL.D., Rector of Somersby; his mother was a daughter of the Rev. Stephen Fytche. After education at Louth Grammar School, and at home, he went in 1828 to Trinity College, Cambridge. His "Poems, chiefly Lyrical," appeared in 1830. In 1850, having meanwhile won the foremost place among living English poets, he succeeded Wordsworth as Poet Laureate (Nov. 19). In June of the same year he married Miss Emily Sellwood. His first home after marriage was at Twickenham, where his eldest son, Hallam, was born in 1852. In 1853 he removed to Farringford, near Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, where his second son, Lionel, was born in 1854. From the year 1869 onwards he had also a second home, Aldworth, near Haslemere in Surrey, where he usually passed the summer and early autumn. In January, 1884, he was created a peer, by the title of Baron Tennyson, of Aldworth and Farringford. He died at Aldworth on Oct. 6, 1892, aged eighty-three years and two months; and on Oct. 12 was buried in Westminster Abbey.]

The gifts by which Tennyson has won, and will keep, his place among the great poets of England are pre-eminently those of an artist. His genius for vivid and musical expression was joined to severe self-restraint, and to a patience which allowed nothing to go forth from him until it had been refined to the utmost perfection that he was capable of giving to it. And his "law of pure and flawless workmanship" (as Matthew Arnold defines the artistic quality in poetry) embraced far more than language: the same instinct controlled his composition in the larger sense; it is seen in the symmetry of each work as a whole, in the due subordination of detail, in the distribution of light and shade, in the happy and discreet use of ornament. His versatility is not less remarkable: no English poet has left masterpieces in so many different kinds of verse. On another side the spiritual subtlety of the artist is seen in the power of finding words for dim and fugitive traits of consciousness; as the artist's vision, at once minute and imaginative,

is seen in his pictures of nature. By this varied and consummate excellence Tennyson ranks with the great artists of all time.

This is the dominant aspect of his poetry. But there is another which presents itself as soon as we take the historical point of view, and inquire into the nature of his influence upon his age. Tennyson was not primarily, like Wordsworth, a philosophical thinker, who felt called upon to be a teacher. But from the middle of the century onwards he was the accepted poet, in respect to thought on religion and on many social questions, of that large public which might be described as the world of cultivated and moderately liberal orthodoxy. Multitudes of these readers were imperfectly capable of appreciating him as an artist: have not some of them been discussing who is "the Pilot" in *Crossing the Bar?* But at any rate they heard a voice which they could generally understand; they felt that it was beautiful and noble; and they loved it because it soothed and elevated them. They cherished a poet who placed the centre of religion in a simple reliance on the divine love; who taught that, through all struggles and perplexities, the time was being guided towards some final good; who saw the results of science not as dangers but as reinforcements to faith; who welcomed material progress and industrial vigour, but always sought to maintain the best traditions of English history and character. Now, this popular element in Tennyson's fame—as it may be called relatively to those elements which sprang from a full appreciation of his art—was not due to any conscious self-adaptation on his part to prevailing currents of thought and feeling. It arose from the peculiar relation of his genius to the period in which he grew up to manhood. His early youth was in England a day of bright dreams and confident auguries; for democracy and steam, all things were to be possible. Then came the reaction; doubts and difficulties thickened; questions started up in every field, bringing with them unrest, discouragement, or even despair. At such a season the poet who is pre-eminently an artist has a twofold opportunity; by creating beauty he can comfort the weary; but a yet higher task is to exercise, through his art, an ennobling and harmonizing influence on those more strenuous yet half-desponding spirits who bear the stress of the transition, while new and crude energies are threatening an abrupt breach with the past. It is a great work to do for a people, to win the popular ear at such a time for counsels of reverence and chivalry; to make them feel that these things are beautiful, and are bonds of the national

life, while the forces that tend to disintegration are also tending to make the people sordid and cynical. This is the work that Sophocles, in his later years, did for Athens, and this is what Tennyson did for the England of his prime.

His reputation was established with comparative ease. The volume, "Poems by Two Brothers" (1827), which he and his brother Charles published before they went to Cambridge, showed chiefly a love of poetry, and (in *Persia*) an exceptional ear for sound: but the Cambridge prize-poem on "Timbuctoo" (1829) was really notable, both in style and in the command of blank verse; it was a presage, however faint and immature, of the future, and was hailed with a natural delight by the author's friends. In 1830 he brought out "Poems, Chiefly Lyrical"—a thin volume, comprising many poems that have held their place, such as *Claribel*, *Mariana*, and *The Dying Swan*. Writing in the *Englishman's Magazine*, Arthur Hallam said, "The features of original genius are clearly and strongly marked. The author imitates nobody." Tennyson's style was, indeed, from the first wholly distinct from that of any poet who had preceded him. Two years later (1832) he published another volume, entitled simply "Poems" and including, among others, *Œnone*, *The Palace of Art*, *The Lotus-Eaters*, *A Dream of Fair Women*, and *The Lady of Shalott*. There was riper art here than in the former book—larger range of themes, greater depth of feeling, and more human interest; but, though the new work was cordially received by many, the full day of Tennyson's fame was not yet. In that charming poem of his latest years, *Merlin and the Gleam*—an allegorical retrospect of the poet's own career—a certain moment in one of its earlier stages is indicated by "the croak of a raven" a bird which, indeed, seldom fails to cross a new singer's path at one point or another. The world at large was still (to quote *Merlin* again), "blind to the magic, and deaf to the melody." Then it was that Tennyson showed his reserved strength. He was silent for ten years, during which he subjected his old work to unsparing revision, and disciplined himself for work yet better by unwearying self-criticism. In 1842 "Poems by Alfred Tennyson" appeared in two volumes. The first volume contained chiefly old poems, revised or re-cast. The pieces in the second volume were almost all new; among them were *The Gardener's Daughter*, *Locksley Hall*, *Break*, *Break*, *Break*, *The Two Voices*, *Ulysses*, and *Morte d'Arthur*. The success was rapid and great. Wordsworth, in a letter to a friend, generously described the author as "de-

cidedly the first of our living poets." Tennyson was then only thirty-three. In the popular estimate his reputation was perhaps not much enhanced by *The Princess* (1847), many as are its beauties, especially lyrical. But when *In Memoriam* appeared, in 1850, it soon won for him a fame as wide as the English-speaking world.

In Memoriam is a typical product of his art, but it is even more representative of his attitude towards the problems and mysteries of human life; it is the poem which best reveals the secret of his largest popularity. It might have seemed hopeless to expect general favour for an elegy of such unprecedented length on a youth who had "miss'd the earthly wreath," leaving a memory cherished by a few friends, who alone could measure the unfulfilled promise. Never, perhaps, has mastery of poetical resource won a more remarkable triumph than in Tennyson's treatment of this theme. The stanza selected, with its twofold capacity for pathos and for resonance, is exactly suited to a flow of self-communing thought, prevailingly pensive, but passing at moments into a loftier or more jubilant note. The rhythm of this stanza also suits the division of the poem into sections; since the cadence of the fourth line—where the rhyme has less emphasis then in the central couplet—can introduce a pause without giving a sense of abruptness. Hence the music of the poem as a whole is continuous, while at the same time each section is an artistic unit. But this felicity is not merely technical; it is closely related to the treatment of the subject-matter. Two strains are interwoven throughout; one is personal—the memory and the sorrow, as they affect the poet; the other is broadly human and general—the experience of the soul as it contemplates life and death, as it finds or misses comfort in the face of nature, as it struggles through doubt to faith, or through anguish to peace. The blending of these two strains—which are constantly passing into each other—serves to idealise the theme, and so to justify the large scale of the treatment; it has also this effect, that the poem becomes a record of successive spiritual moods, varied as the range of thought and emotion into which the personal grief broadens out. The composition of *In Memoriam* was, indeed, spread over seventeen years. The form has thus an inner correspondence with the material; each lyric section is a spiritual mood—not sharply separated from that which precedes or from that which follows it, yet with a completeness of its own. Among particular traits, one which deserves especial notice is the

wonderful adumbration of the lost friend's power and charm. Neither quite definite nor yet mystic, the presence made sacred by death flits, with a strange light around it, through the poem; it never comes or goes without making us feel that this great sorrow is no fantasy, but has its root in a great loss. The religious thought of *In Memoriam* bears the stamp of the time at which it was produced, in so far as doubts, frankly treated, are met with a sober optimism of a purely subjective and emotional kind. But the poem has also an abiding and universal significance as the journal of a mind slowly passing through a bitter ordeal, and as an expression of reliance on the "Strong Son of God, immortal Love."

The *Idylls of the King*, in their complete form, include work of various periods. Tennyson's interest in the legends of the Arthurian cycle was shown at an early date, and was fruitful at intervals during half a century. *The Lady of Shalott* (1832) was his lyric prelude to the theme; two kindred lyrics—*Sir Galahad* and *Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere*—found place in the volumes of 1842, which contained also the epic *Morte d'Arthur*, now incorporated in *The Passing of Arthur*. A half-playful prologue introduces the *Morte d'Arthur* as the only surviving canto of an epic which had been consigned to the flames: perhaps the poet felt, in 1842, that the taste for "romance" had so far waned as to render this "fragment" somewhat of an experiment. It is one of his finest pieces of blank verse, and the reception given to it was an invitation to continue the strain. But it was not till 1859 that he published the first set of Idylls—*Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*. In 1870 appeared *The Coming of Arthur*, *The Holy Grail*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, and *The Passing of Arthur:* followed in 1872 by *Gareth and Lynette* and *The Last Tournament*, and in 1885 by *Balin and Balan*. The twelve books (two being given to Enid) are now arranged in the order of events; but in the order of composition, as we have seen, the last portion of the story came first, the beginning next, and the middle last. Such a process of growth is in itself a warning that the series, though it had been planned from the outset as a whole, should not be tried by the ordinary tests of an epic: the unity is here less strict; the main current of narrative is less continuous. "Idyll" is, indeed, exactly the right word; each is a separate picture, rich in passages of brilliant power, but distinguished especially by finish of detail. Arthur's ideal purpose is rather a golden thread, common to the several pieces but not equally vital to all, than an organic bond among

them; and the pervading allegory of "sense at war with soul" is at most a link of another kind. But instead of epic concentration these Idylls have a charm of their own. From tracing the destiny of the king, they lead us aside, now and again, into those by-ways of romance where a light tinged with modern thought and fancy is thrown on mediæval forest and castle, on tournament and bower, on the chivalry, the tenderness, the violence, the enchantments, and the faith. Arthur's fortunes are illustrated by his age. No other single work shows so comprehensively the range of Tennyson's power; the variety of the theme demands a corresponding wealth of resource; there is scarcely any mood of the mind, any phase of action, any aspect of nature which does not find expression somewhere or other in the *Idylls*.

But a poet who is everywhere an exquisite artist, and who is also remarkably versatile, cannot be adequately judged except by the sum total of his work; there are notes which he may strike only once or twice in the whole of it. Thus in *Maud*—never a popular poem, in spite of the marvellous lyrics—he touches his highest point in the utterance of passion; its dramatic power is undisputed. The general verdict upon his plays has been that they are more distinguished by excellence of literary execution than by qualities properly dramatic; though few critics, perhaps, would deny the dramatic effectiveness of particular scenes or passages, in *Harold*, for example, or *Becket*, or *The Cup*. But whatever may be the final judgment upon the plays, *Maud* remains to prove, that among Tennyson's gifts, the dramatic gift was at least not originally absent; though its manifestation in that poem is necessarily limited to a particular phase. Turning next to a different region of his work, we see in *The Northern Farmer* ("old style") a quality which hardly any imaginative writer of this century has better exemplified—the power of faithfully conceiving a very narrow mental horizon, without allowing a single disturbing ray to steal in from the artist's own mind. Again: in the interpretation of feeling, this poet can seize impressions so transient, so difficult of analysis, that they might seem to defy the grasp of language; one recognises them almost with a start, as if some voice, once familiar, were unexpectedly heard;

> "Moreover something is or seems,
> That touches me with mystic gleams,
> Like glimpses of forgotten dreams."

Or:

"The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go."

Akin to this faculty is Tennyson's subtle expression of *desiderium*, the indefinable yearning towards "the days that are no more," as in *Break, Break, Break*, or in *Tears, Idle Tears*.

His descriptions of nature exhibit two qualities, distinct in essence, though sometimes combined. One appears in his landscape-painting: it is the gift of selecting salient features and composing them into an artistic picture—such as that of the "vale in Ida," where

"The swimming vapour floats athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn";

or of that coral island where Enoch Arden heard

"The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith . . ."

The distinction of his imaginary landscapes is not merely vividness or truth, but the union of these with a certain dreamy and aërial charm. His other great quality as a nature-poet is seen in the treatment of detail—in vignettes where the result of minute and keen insight is made to live before us in some magical phrase; such as "The shining levels of the lake"; "The twinkling laurel scatters silver lights"; the shoal of fish that "came slipping o'er their shadows on the sand." His accuracy in this province is said to be unerring: thus a critic who twitted him with having made a "crow" lead a "rookery" had to learn that in Lincolnshire, as in some other parts of Britain, "crow" is the generic term. In this context we must not forget *Owd Roä*—as pathetic a tribute as any in English poetry to the heroism of a dog. In regard to the vegetation of England, and, generally, to the peculiar charm of English scenery, Tennyson is the foremost of English poets; no one else has painted them with such accurate felicity. Among the English poets of the sea, too, he has a high place; he can describe, as in *Elaine*, the wind in strife with the billow of the North Sea, "green-glimmering toward the summit"; but especially his verse can give back all the tones of the sea upon the shore, and can interpret their sympathy with the varying moods of the human spirit.

Seven of his poems are on subjects from Greek mythology—*The Lotus-Eaters*, *Ulysses*, *Œnone*, *The Death of Œnone*, *Tithonus*, *Tiresias*, *Demeter and Persephone*. In each case he has chosen a theme which left scope for artistic originality—the ancient material being either meagre or second-rate. Each poem presents, in small or moderate compass, the picture of a moment, or of an episode; "brief idyll" is the phrase by which he describes his *Tiresias* (in the lines on the death of Edward Fitzgerald). The common characteristic of these seven poems is the consummate art which has caught the spirit of the antique, without a trace of pedantry in form or in language. The blank verse (used for all except *The Lotus-Eaters*) has a restrained power, and a flexible yet majestic grace, which produces an effect analogous to that of Greek sculpture. Tennyson's instinct for classical literary art appears in his epitome of Virgil's style—

"All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word";

as, again, his sympathy with the temper of the old world's sorrow is seen in the verses written at "olive-silvery Sirmio," and suggested by the lines of Catullus, *Frater ave atque vale*. In *Lucretius* Tennyson shows an intimate knowledge of that poet's work, and a curious skill in reproducing his tone; but the highest interest of this masterpiece is psychological and dramatic. It translates the sober earnestness of Lucretius into a morbid phase. The *De Rerum Natura* is silent on the difficulty of reconciling the gods with the cosmology of Epicurus. But now, when the whole inner life of Lucretius is unhinged by the workings of the poison, the doubt, so long repressed by reverence for the Greek master, starts up—

> "The Gods! the Gods!
> If all be atoms, how then should the Gods
> Being atomic, not be dissoluble,
> Not follow the great law?"

Tennyson's English is always pure and idiomatic, avoiding foreign words, though without pedantic rigour; and he commands many different shades of diction, finely graduated according to the subject. One of his aims was to recall expressive words which had fallen out of common use; in the Idylls, more especially, he found scope for this. His melody, in its finer secrets, eludes analysis; but one element of it, the delicate management of vowel-sounds,

can be seen in such lines as "The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm"; or, "Katie walks by the long wash of Australasian seas." The latter verse illustrates also another trait of his melody—the restrained use of alliteration, which he scarcely allows, as a rule, to strike the ear, unless he has some artistic motive for making it prominent, as in parts of *Maud*, and in some of the songs in *The Princess*. As a metrist, he is the creator of a new blank verse, different both from the Elizabethan and from the Miltonic. He has known how to modulate it to every theme, and to elicit a music appropriate to each; attuning it in turn to a tender and homely grace, as in *The Gardener's Daughter;* to the severe and ideal majesty of the antique, as in *Tithonus;* to meditative thought, as in *The Ancient Sage*, or *Akbar's Dream;* to pathetic or tragic tales of contemporary life, as in *Aylmer's Field*, or *Enoch Arden;* or to sustained romantic narrative, as in the *Idylls*. No English poet has used blank verse with such flexible variety, or drawn from it so large a compass of tones; nor has any maintained it so equably on a high level of excellence. In lyric metres Tennyson has invented much, and has also shown a rare power of adaptation. Many of his lyric measures are wholly his own; while others have been so treated by him as to make them virtually new. The *In Memoriam* stanza had been used before him, though he was unaware of this when he adopted it; but no predecessor had shown its full capabilities. In the first part of *The Lotus-Eaters* he employs the Spenserian stanza, but gives it a peculiar tone, suited to the theme; the melody is so contrived that languor seems to weigh upon every verse. To illustrate his lyric harmonies of form and matter would be to enumerate his lyrics; two or three instances must suffice. The close-locked three-line stanza of *The Two Voices* suits the series of compact sentiments or points:

> "Then to the still small voice I said,
> Let me not cast in endless shade
> What is so wonderfully made."

In *The Palace of Art*, the shortened fourth line of the quatrain gives a restful pause, inviting to the contemplation of pictures:—

> Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,
> Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
> Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
> An angel look'd at her.

The stanza of *The Daisy*, again, suits the light grace which plays around those memories of travel:—

> O Love, what hours were thine and mine,
> In lands of palm and southern pine;
> In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
> Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

These are, however, only a few lyric examples of a quality which belongs to all his work. Throughout its wide range, he has everywhere accomplished the harmony of form and matter: the charm of the utterance is indivisible from the charm of the thought. Poetical art which has done this is raised above changes of tendency or fashion; it is as permanent as beauty. Tennyson, in wielding the English language, has been a great and original artist; he has enriched English literature with manifold and imperishable models of excellence. He has expressed, with absolute felicity, numberless phases in the great primary emotions of human nature —love, joy, grief, hope, despondency, the moods of youth and of age, the response in the soul to the various aspects of nature, the sense of awful mystery in human life, the instincts, vague yet persistent, which aspire to immortality, and seem to promise it, the yearning faith in divine goodness and guidance—feelings common to humanity, no doubt, but not therefore commonplace, unless that epithet is applicable to sunrise and starlight. His teaching has been pure, high-hearted, and manly; full of love for his country, and true to the things which have made England great. Among all the masters of English song, there is none who can give more exquisite delight to those who feel his inmost charm; and there is probably none who has brought a larger gift of noble pleasure and of comfort to people of all sorts, especially to those in perplexity or sorrow.

R. C. JEBB.

Claribel

A Melody

I

Where Claribel low-lieth
  The breezes pause and die,
    Letting the rose-leaves fall:
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
    Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
  With an ancient melody
  Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II

At eve the beetle boometh
  Athwart the thicket lone:
At noon the wild bee hummeth
  About the moss'd headstone:
At midnight the moon cometh,
  And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
  The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
  The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
  Where Claribel low-lieth.

A Dirge

I

Now is done thy long day's work;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
      Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
      Let them rave.

II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed
Chaunteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny?
Let them rave.
Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;
The woodbine and eglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.
Let them rave.
Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.
Let them rave.
These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine;
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.
Let them rave.
Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII

Wild words wander here and there:
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused:
But let them rave.
The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

The Lady of Shalott

Part I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver.
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle embowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:

There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot:
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:

And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot.

Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

ELEÄNORE

I

Thy dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English air,
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighbourhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd
With breezes from our oaken glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land
Of lavish lights, and floating shades:
And flattering thy childish thought
The oriental fairy brought,
At the moment of thy birth,
From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,
The choicest wealth of all the earth,
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

II

Or the yellow-banded bees,
Thro' half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
With whitest honey in fairy gardens cull'd—
A glorious child, dreaming alone,
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
With the hum of swarming bees
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

III

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister
To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and blinded
With many a deep-hued bell-like flower
Of fragrant trailers, when the air
Sleepeth over all the heaven,
And the crag that fronts the Even,
All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland mere,
Eleänore!

IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,
How may measured words adore
The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
Eleänore?
The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
Eleänore?
Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,
Eleänore,

And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For in thee
Is nothing sudden, nothing single;
Like two streams of incense free
From one censer in one shrine,
Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as tho'
They were modulated so
To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a sweep
Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
Who may express thee, Eleänore?

V

I stand before thee, Eleänore;
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
Daily and hourly, more and more.
I muse, as in a trance, the while
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
The languors of thy love-deep eyes
Float on to me. I would I were
So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
To stand apart, and to adore,
Gazing on thee for evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore!

VI

Sometimes, with most intensity
Gazing, I seem to see
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,
Slowly awaken'd grow so full and deep
In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
But am as nothing in its light:
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
Ev'n while we gaze on it,

Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow
To a full face, there like a sun remain
Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,
And draw itself to what it was before;
So full, so deep, so slow,
Thought seems to come and go
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,
Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
Grow golden all about the sky;
In thee all passion becomes passionless,
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
Losing his fire and active might
In a silent meditation,
Falling into a still delight,
And luxury of contemplation:
As waves that up a quiet cove
Rolling slide, and lying still
Shadow forth the banks at will:
Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,
With motions of the outer sea:
And the self-same influence
Controlleth all the soul and sense
Of Passion gazing upon thee.
His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
Droops both his wings, regarding thee,
And so would languish evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore.

VIII

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,
While the amorous, odorous wind
Breathes low between the sunset and the moon;
Or, in a shadowy saloon,
On silken cushions half reclined;

I watch thy grace; and in its place
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
While I muse upon thy face;
And a languid fire creeps
Thro' my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly: soon
From thy rose-red lips MY name
Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my colour, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from thee;
Yet tell my name again to me,
I *would* be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleänore.

Of old sat Freedom on the Heights

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet:
Above her shook the starry lights:
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

Love Thou Thy Land

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years:
Cut Prejudice against the grain:
But gentle words are always gain:
Regard the weakness of thy peers:

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pensions, neither count on praise:
It grows to guerdon after-days:
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch:

Not clinging to some ancient saw;
Not master'd by some modern term;
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm:
And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life, that, working strongly, binds—
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapour, hard to mark;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes:
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

You Ask Me, Why, Tho' Ill at Ease

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent:

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

Morte d'Arthur

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonness about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,

And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word."
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fëalty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.

This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,
"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost."
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."
So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

Ulysses

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this grey spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:

It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

St. Agnes' Eve

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
  Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapour goes:
  May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
  Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
  That lead me to my Lord:
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
  As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
  That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
  To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
  To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
  My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
  To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
  Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
  In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
  The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
  And strows her lights below,

And deepens on and up! the gates
  Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
  To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
  One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
  The Bridegroom with his bride!

Break, Break, Break

Break, break, break,
  On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
  The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
  That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
  That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
  To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
  And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
  At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
  Will never come back to me.

[From *The Princess*]

I

THE SPLENDOUR FALLS ON CASTLE WALLS

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

II

TEARS, IDLE TEARS

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

[From *In Memoriam*]

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
"The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:"

Might I not say? "Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive:"
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
"The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

CIX

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

[From *Maud*, Part I, xviii]

I

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

II

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

III

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,

Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she came.

IV

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

V

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

VI

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
"The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear."

VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
It is but for a little space I go:
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendours that you look so bright?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:
Let all be well, be well.

The Brook

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington

[Published in 1852]

I

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

V

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamour of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.

Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

VII

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt

Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right:
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,

He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure:
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory:
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue

Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung:
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him

Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

I

Half a league, half a league,
  Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said:
Into the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.

II

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
  Some one had blunder'd:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
  Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
  Volley'd and thunder'd;

Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
  Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
  All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
  Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
  Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
  Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
  Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
  All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
  Noble six hundred!

Northern Farmer

Old Style

I

Wheer 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thourt nowt o' a noorse: whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän:
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle: but I beänt a fool:
Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to breäk my rule.

II

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what 's nawways true:
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.
I 've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere,
An' I 've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

III

Parson 's a beän loikewoise, an' a sittin' 'ere o' my bed.
"The amoighty 's a taäkin o' you [1] to 'issén, my friend," a said,
An' a towd ma my sins, an 's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.
Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch and staäte,
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock [2] ower my 'eäd,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd, but I thowt a'ad summut to saäy,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

[1] ou as in hour. [2] Cockchafer.

VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understond;
I done moy duty boy 'um as I ' a done boy the lond.

VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä
"The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," says 'eä.
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste:
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

VIII

D'ya moind the waäte, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen;
Moäst loike a butter-bump,[1] fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,
But I stubb'd 'um poo wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

IX

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
Down i' the woild 'enemies [2] afoor I coom'd to the plaäce.
Noäks or Thimbleby—toäner [3] 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize—but git ma my aäle.

X

Dubbut looök at the waäste: theer warn't not feeäd for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now—
Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer 's lots of feeäd,
Fourscoor [4] yows upon it an' some on it down i' seeäd.

XI

Nobbut a bit on it 's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

[1] Bittern. [2] Anemones. [3] One or other.
[4] ou as in hour.

XII

Do godamoighty knaw what a 's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all—a' dear a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant nor a 'aöpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins—a niver mended a fence:
But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

XIV

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén naw doubt "what a man a beä sewer-loy!"
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All;
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

XV

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä 's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins—a niver rembles the stoäns.

XVI

But summun 'll come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Divil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

XVII

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aäle?
Doctor 's a 'toättler, lass, an a 's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my aäle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

TITHONUS

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.

Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.

Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seëst all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

Milton

(Alcaics)

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrëan
Rings to the roar of an angel onset—
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

The Sailor Boy

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbour-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,
"O boy, tho' thou art young and proud,
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

"The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play."

"Fool," he answer'd, "death is sure
To those that stay and those that roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

"My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, 'Stay for shame;'
My father raves of death and wreck,
They are all to blame, they are all to blame.

"God help me! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me."

[From *Idylls of the King: Guinevere*]

ARTHUR'S FAREWELL

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
Then waiting by the doors the warhorse neigh'd
As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:
"Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,
The doom of treason and the flaming death,
(When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.
The pang—which while I weigh'd thy heart with one
Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
Made my tears burn—is also past—in part.
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,

Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.
But how to take last leave of all I loved?
O golden hair, with which I used to play
Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,
And beauty such as never woman wore,
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the King's.
I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own flesh,
Here looking down on thine polluted, cries
'I loathe thee:' yet not less, O Guinevere,
For I was ever virgin save for thee,
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.
Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow:
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts
Far down to that great battle in the west,
Where I must strike against the man they call
My sister's son—no kin of mine, who leagues
With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,
Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet myself
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;
But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side; see thee no more—
Farewell!"

And while she grovell'd at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,
Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

The Revenge

A Ballad of the Fleet

I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
"Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: "'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?"

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!

There 'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears,
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

X

For he said "Fight on! fight on!"
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said "Fight on! fight on!"

XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;

And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

XII

And the gunner said "Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply:
"We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the deep,

And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

To Virgil

Written at the request of the Mantuans for the nineteenth centenary of Virgil's death

I

Roman Virgil, thou that singest
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre;

II

Landscape-lover, lord of language
more than he that sang the Works and Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden phrase;

III

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses
often flowering in a lonely word;

IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus
piping underneath his beechen bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyr
whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers;

V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

VI

Thou that seëst Universal
Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human kind;

VII

Light among the vanish'd ages;
star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's dome—
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound for ever of Imperial Rome—

IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the Northern Island
sunder'd once from all the human race,

X

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man.

Hymn

[From *Akbar's Dream*]

I

Once again thou flamest heavenward, once again we see thee rise.
Every morning is thy birthday gladdening human hearts and eyes.
Every morning here we greet it, bowing lowly down before thee,
Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless, in thine ever-changing skies.

II

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light from clime to clime,
Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in their woodland rhyme.
Warble bird, and open flower, and, men, below the dome of azure
Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame that measures Time!

God and the Universe

I

Will my tiny spark of being wholly vanish in your deeps and heights?
Must my day be dark by reason, O ye Heavens, of your boundless nights,
Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and your fiery clash of meteorites?

II

"Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the limit of thy human state,
Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent Opener of the Gate."

Crossing the Bar

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

RICHARD HENRY HORNE

[Born January 1, 1803, in London. In middle life he changed his name of Henry for that of Hengist. Literature shared his devotion with a life of adventure; he served in the Mexican navy and he dug for gold in Australia. He published four poetic plays, the most widely known of which is probably *The Death of Marlowe* (1837), and his other poetical works were *Orion* (1843) and *Ballad Romances* (1846). His prose writings included *A New Spirit of the Age* (1844). He lived until 1884, dying on March 13 of that year.]

For his verse dramas Horne was extravagantly praised in his own day as an Elizabethan born out of due time. Of the tumultuous and passionate poetry that was at the call of nearly all the Elizabethan playwrights Horne had nothing, and what his plays had of poetical merit was derived, in spite of the critics who so strongly asserted that here was nothing of imitation, partly from his own polished sense of verse but chiefly from sympathetic recollection. They had, however, one striking quality which he owed to no man; they moved with a real interest of action, and the action was related with honourable art to the development of character or idea and was not used for any merely vulgar sensationalism. It is this quality that gives its value to Horne's *Orion*, the epic that by reason of its original price of one farthing obtained notoriety before it secured a very just measure of fame. The poet in a preface claimed serious consideration for the philosophical theme, looking to this for his justification. The philosophical passages, however, make unprofitable reading, and the abstractions of the poem, such as Akinetos, the Great Unmoved, are almost comic in their solemnity. The epic would, moreover, be a fruitful ground for the anthologist of the flattest lines in poetry,—

> "Giddy with happiness Orion's spirit
> Now danced in air." . . .

and—

> "His friends Orion left
> His further preparations to complete." . . .

and—

"'Gainst Merope
Some spake aloud; against Orion, all,—
Save the bald sage, who said ''twas natural.'
'Natural!' they cried: 'O wretch!' The sage was stoned."

and—

"Hence, never moved by hands unskilled
But moved as best may be. Be warned; sit still."

—and others which readers will discover for themselves embedded in the fine passage here given. But when all this is said, *Orion* remains an extremely interesting and in some respects an excellent poem. The loves of Orion for Artemis, Merope, and Eos, and his activities in the kingdom of Oinopion, are told with great force and conviction, and with many charming turns of description. Troublesome as the philosophy may be, it does not overload the poem unduly, and the reader's attention is carried through by the sheer human interest of the story in a manner which is as refreshing as it is rare. There are very few poems of its rank and length that are so little open to the charge of dullness, and Horne on this account if on no other deserves a much wider public than he has retained. His ambition, no doubt, was to justify anew the ways of God to man, and he had not the intellectual power to translate so cosmic a plan into poetry. But he passionately realized the human nature of his hero, and in consequence he made a poem of some three thousand lines emotionally exciting, which is no mean achievement for any poet. *Orion* has tedious patches, but it is anything but a tedious poem, and once a poor opening has been passed it gives, for all its flaws, a great deal of pleasure of a high order.

The *Ballad Romances* have the same forthright qualities, telling very readable tales in good homespun verse, and keeping always in touch with emotional sanity. There is much delicacy of invention in *The Three Knights of Camelott*, and the story of *Bedd Gelert* is admirably and poignantly told, whilst in *The Noble Heart* and *Delora* [1] there are many passages of close imaginative perception. The book emphasizes Horne's claim to no mean poetic honour.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

[1] Though it contains a line that must be a record, even for Horne: the tyrant exclaiming at the hero's persistence—

"Blight him! and blast him! What, *again!*"

(From *Orion*. Book I, Canto II)

One day, at noontide, when the chase was done,
Which with unresting speed since dawn had held,
The woods were all with golden fires alive,
And heavy limbs tingled with glowing heat.
Sylvans and Fauns at full length cast them down,
And cooled their flame-red faces in the grass,
Or o'er a streamlet bent, and dipped their heads
Deep as the top hair of their pointed ears;
While Nymphs and Oceanides retired
To grots and sacred groves, with loitering steps,
And bosoms swelled and throbbing, like a bird's
Held between human hands. The hounds with tongues
Crimson, and lolling hot upon the green,
And outstretched noses, flatly crouched; their skins
Clouded or spotted, like the field-bean's flower,
Or tiger-lily, painted the wide lawns.

Orion wandered deep into a vale
Alone; from all the rest his steps he bent,
Thoughtful, yet with no object in his mind;
Languid, yet restless. Near a hazel copse,
Whose ripe nuts hung in clusters twined with grapes,
He paused, down gazing, till upon his sense
A fragrance stole, as of ambrosia wafted
Through the warm shades by some divinity
Amid the woods. With gradual step he moved
Onward, and soon the poppied entrance found
Of a secluded bower. He entered straight,
Unconsciously attracted, and beheld
His Goddess love, who slept—her robe cast off,
Her sandals, bow and quiver, thrown aside,
Yet with her hair still braided, and her brow
Decked with her crescent light. Awed and alarmed
By loving reverence—which dreads offence
E'en though the wrong were never known, and feels
Its heart's religion for religion's self,
Besides its object's claim—swift he retired.

The entrance gain'd, what thoughts, what visions his!
What danger had he 'scaped, what innocent crime,
Which Artemis might yet have felt so deep!
He blest the God of Sleep who thus had held
Her senses! Yet, what loveliness had glanced
Before his mind—scarce seen! Might it not be
Illusion?—some bright shadow of a hope
First dawning? Would not sleep's God still exert
Safe influence, if he once more stole back
And gazed an instant? 'Twere not well to do,
And would o'erstain with doubt the accident
Which first had led him there. He dare not risk
The chance 'twere not illusion—oh, if true!
While thus he murmured hesitating, slow,
As slow and hesitating he returned
Instinctively, and on the Goddess gazed!

With adoration and delicious fear,
Lingering he stood; then pace by pace retired,
Till in the hazel copse sighing he paused,
And with most earnest face, and vacant eye,
And brow perplexed, stared at a tree. His hands
Were clenched; his burning feet pressed down the soil,
And changed their place. Suddenly he turned round,
And made his way direct into the bower.

There was a slumb'rous silence in the air,
By noon-tide's sultry murmurs from without
Made more oblivious. Not a pipe was heard
From field or wood; but the grave beetle's drone
Passed near the entrance; once the cuckoo called
O'er distant meads, and once a horn began
Melodious plaint, then died away. A sound
Of murmurous music yet was in the breeze,
For silver gnats that harp on glassy strings,
And rise and fall in sparkling clouds, sustained
Their dizzy dances o'er the seething meads.
With brain as dizzy stood Orion now
I' the quivering bower. There rapturous he beheld,
As in a trance, not conscious of himself,

The perfect sculpture of that naked form,
Whose Parian whiteness and clear outline gleamed
In its own hue, nor from the foliage took
One tint, nor from his ample frame one shade.
Her lovely hair hung drooping, half unbound,—
Fair silken braids, fawn-tinted delicately,
That on one shoulder lodge their opening coil.
Her large round arms of dazzling beauty lay
In matchless symmetry and inviolate grace,
Along the mossy floor. At length he dropped
Softly upon his knees, his clasped hands raised
Above his head, till by resistless impulse
His arms descending, were expanded wide—
Swift as a flash, erect the Goddess rose!

Her eyes shot through Orion, and he felt
Within his breast an icy dart. Confronted,
Mutely they stood, but all the bower was filled
With rising mist that chilled him to the bone,
Colder, as more obscure the space became;
And ere the last collected shape he saw
Of Artemis, dispersing fast amid
Dense vapoury clouds, the aching wintriness
Had risen to his teeth, and fixed his eyes,
Like glistening stones in the congealing air.

The Plough [1]

Above yon sombre swell of land
  Thou see'st the dawn's grave orange hue,
With one pale streak like yellow sand,
  And over that a vein of blue.

The air is cold above the woods;
  All silent is the earth and sky,
Except with his own lonely moods
  The blackbird holds a colloquy.

[1] Published only in the 1875 reprint of *Cosmo de' Medici*.

Over the broad hill creeps a beam,
  Like hope that gilds a good man's brow;
And now ascends the nostril-stream
  Of stalwart horses come to plough.

Ye rigid Ploughman, bear in mind
  Your labour is for future hours:
Advance—spare not—nor look behind—
  Plough deep and straight with all your powers.

CARDINAL NEWMAN

[JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, the eldest son of a banker, John Newman, was born in London in 1801. Educated privately, and at Trinity College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1820. Elected Fellow of Oriel, April 12, 1822, to be joined next year by E. B. Pusey, while other Fellows during his terms were Hawkins, Whately, Keble, and Hurrell Froude. He was ordained a clergyman of the Church of England in 1824, and nine years later he and his friends published the (Anglican) *Tracts for the Times*. These were the printed expression of the so-called "Oxford Movement;" but in October, 1845, having two years earlier resigned the Vicarage of St. Mary's, Newman was received into the Church of Rome. His *Apologia pro vita sua* was published in 1864, and many other works of Catholic theology, &c., preceded and followed it. In 1878 Pope Leo XIII made him a Cardinal on representations made by leading English Catholics, lay and clerical. In 1890 he died at the Edgbaston Oratory, where he had lived since 1859. He published anonymously, from 1834 onwards, many religious poems, most of which were in 1868 collected in *Verses on Various Occasions;* and two years before (1866) there appeared his one long poem, *The Dream of Gerontius*.]

It is remarkable that whereas the work of Cardinal Newman's long life survives in some of the noblest prose in English literature, he is chiefly known wherever the English language is spoken as the author of one short and of one long poem—*Lead, Kindly Light* and *The Dream of Gerontius*. There can be no doubt that the popular choice of these two poems from among the slender output of the *Verses on Various Occasions* is justified, and that they are the finest among them. *The Pillar of the Cloud*, now universally called *Lead, Kindly Light*, belongs to the group of seventy poems written during his seven months' journey to the Mediterranean (1832–33)—that is, considerably more than half of the original poems produced in a life of nearly ninety years. Throughout this journey evidently his imagination was undergoing one of those sudden expansions of which he loved to analyse the psychological effects in later days. The best of his short poems were written then, including two studies in the style of the tragic Greek chorus—*The Elements* and *The Jewish Race*, of which Mr. R. H. Hutton wrote that "For grandeur

of outline, purity of taste and radiance of total effect, I know hardly any poems in the language that equal them." [1]

That *Lead, Kindly Light* was written in 1833, immediately before the Oxford Movement, is a fact that has great biographical interest. But that the value of the poem is not chiefly biographical is clear from its having proved of such universal appeal. It is not too much to say that "Deep in the general heart of man (its) power survives."

Over thirty years passed and most of his greatest work in prose had been accomplished before Newman wrote *The Dream of Gerontius*. After a time of comparative inaction there was in 1864 a mighty stir in the creative faculty of the recluse at Birmingham, when he came forward at the challenge of Mr. Kingsley and produced the *Apologia pro vita sua*. In January, 1865, came *The Dream*. "On the 17th of January," he wrote to a friend, "it came into my head to write it, I really can't tell how, and I wrote on until it was finished on small bits of paper, and I could no more write anything else by willing it than I could fly."

It seems the more remarkable that this poem has so wide a reading public as it is singularly intellectual in treatment. It is surely rare to have so purely intellectual a conception of any form of existence. Hitherto had not dreams or visions of another life in great literature been given us with superabundant symbolism and imagery? The mere thought of Revelation, of Dante, or Milton, or Bunyan brings a crowd of splendid images before the imagination. But in Newman's vision there is no great white throne, no gates of pearl, no sea of glass, no sweet season, no light and darkness, no delectable mountain. Indeed, with the exception of "one lightning flash" of mysterious vision at the culminating moment of the poem, there is nothing but what seems to Gerontius to be sound, and that not the sound of harps or of rushing waters, but simply of the voices of spirits. "I hear thee, *not* see thee, Angel," cries Gerontius, and the angel answers,—

> "Nor touch, nor taste, nor hearing hast thou now;
> Thou livest in a world of signs and types."

But . . . "lest so stern a solitude should load and break thy being" . . . "dreams that are true are vouchsafed;" and he proceeds to sketch some economy of presentation by means of which converse with the angel, and apparently with the angel alone, is

[1] *Cardinal Newman*, by R. H. Hutton, p. 44.

possible. And as there is some mysterious method of communication which seems to the disembodied spirit to be that of speaking and hearing, so for a moment only there will be sight:—

> "Then sight, or that which to the soul is sight,
> As by a lightning-flash, will come to thee,
> And thou shalt see, amid the dark profound,
> Whom thy soul loveth, and would fain approach."

It is clear later on that in this vision the humanity of God made man is revealed. The loneliness of Gerontius before and after that vision is increased by the absence of any saint or hero amid the angelic choirs.

In what the angel tells Gerontius of the world invisible, allusions to anything material are avoided or explained thus:

> "So in the world of spirits nought is found,
> To mould withal, and form into a whole,
> But what is immaterial; and thus
> The smallest portions of this edifice,
> Cornice, or frieze, or balustrade, or stair,
> The very pavement is made up of life—
> Of holy, blessed, and immortal beings,
> Who hymn their Maker's praise continually."

Time, again, the Angel tells his charge, is no longer measured by "sun and moon"

> "But intervals in their succession
> Are measured by the living thought alone
> And grow or wane with its intensity."

If there was nothing to appeal to popular taste in the imagery of the dream, neither was there anything to touch ordinary human affections. The "angel faces" of *Lead, Kindly Light* can at least be interpreted as human faces. There is not an allusion to any grief felt by Gerontius at parting from those who are still kneeling and praying round his bed, or to any thought of meeting again those who had passed before him. Yet this poem exercises a strong attraction for the uneducated as well as the educated. "I know," writes Father Ryder, "a poor stocking weaver who on his deathbed made his wife read it to him repeatedly."

If the work had been mainly intellectual in quality it would have appealed only to the cultured few. But the peculiarity of the poem

is that despite its strange detachment it is full of passionate feeling: it suggests the austerity and transparency of a fine stained-glass window flushed with intense and glorious colour. It is indeed the one unreserved and passionate expression of the romance of Newman's life. It is the culmination of a life-long love story, the love of the soul for the All-Beautiful. Gerontius, as soon as he is able to speak to the angel, asks no question about his own fate, he asks only whether he will be able to see at once the Object of his love. "What lets me now from going to my Lord?" Then as suffering is the secret of romance we come to the drama of the "willing agony."

In the fifteenth century Catherine of Genoa had explained the "willing agony" to her disciples. The soul, she told them, would not, if it could, forego the purgatorial pain—which alone, as she believed, can make it fit for the Divine union. The last word of Gerontius in the poem is to ask that his night of trial may not be delayed:—

> "Take me away,
> That sooner I may rise, and go above,
> And see Him in the truth of everlasting day."

The poem embodies, then, a great passion to which a great intellect gave expression and which has found a spiritual echo in the souls of men.

JOSEPHINE WARD.

MEMORY

My home is now a thousand miles away;
  Yet in my thoughts its every image fair
  Rises as keen, as I still linger'd there,
And, turning me, could all I loved survey.
And so, upon Death's unaverted day,
  As I speed upwards, I shall on me bear,
  And in no breathless whirl, the things that were,
And duties given, and ends I did obey.
And, when at length I reach the Throne of Power,
Ah! still unscared, I shall in fulness see
The vision of my past innumerous deeds,
My deep heart-courses, and their motive-seeds,
So to gaze on till the red dooming hour.
Lord, in that strait, the Judge! remember me!

Off Cape Trafalgar. *December* 15th, 1832.

The Pillar of the Cloud

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home—
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path, but now
Lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

At Sea. *June* 16th, 1833.

From "The Dream of Gerontius"

I

Soul of Gerontius

I went to sleep; and now I am refresh'd,
A strange refreshment: for I feel in me
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
And ne'er had been before. How still it is!
I hear no more the busy beat of time,
No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse;
Nor does one moment differ from the next.
I had a dream; yes:—some one softly said
"He 's gone;" and then a sigh went round the room.

And then I surely heard a priestly voice
Cry "Subvenite;" and they knelt in prayer.
I seem to hear him still; but thin and low,
And fainter and more faint the accents come,
As at an ever-widening interval.
Ah! whence is this? What is this severance?
This silence pours a solitariness
Into the very essence of my soul;
And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,
Hath something too of sternness and of pain.

. . . . . .

So much I know, not knowing how I know,
That the vast universe, where I have dwelt,
Is quitting me, or I am quitting it.
Or I or it is rushing on the wings
Of light or lightning on an onward course,
And we e'en now are million miles apart.
Yet . . . is this peremptory severance
Wrought out in lengthening measurements of space,
Which grow and multiply by speed and time?
Or am I traversing infinity
By endless subdivision, hurrying back
From finite towards infinitesimal,
Thus dying out of the expansive world?

Another marvel: some one has me fast
Within his ample palm; 'tis not a grasp
Such as they use on earth, but all around
Over the surface of my subtle being,
As though I were a sphere, and capable
To be accosted thus, a uniform
And gentle pressure tells me I am not
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.
And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth
I cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones.
Oh, what a heart-subduing melody!

II

Soul

Thou speakest mysteries; still methinks I know
To disengage the tangle of thy words:
Yet rather would I hear thy angel voice,
Than for myself be thy interpreter.

Angel

When then—if such thy lot—thou seest thy Judge,
The sight of Him will kindle in thy heart
All tender, gracious, reverential thoughts.
Thou wilt be sick with love, and yearn for Him,
And feel as though thou couldst but pity Him,
That one so sweet should e'er have placed Himself
At disadvantage such, as to be used
So vilely by a being so vile as thee.
There is a pleading in His pensive eyes
Will pierce thee to the quick, and trouble thee.
And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself; for, though
Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast sinn'd,
As never thou didst feel; and wilt desire
To slink away, and hide thee from His sight:
And yet wilt have a longing aye to dwell
Within the beauty of His countenance.
And these two pains, so counter and so keen,—
The longing for Him, when thou seest Him not;
The shame of self at thought of seeing Him,—
Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.

Soul

My soul is in my hand: I have no fear,—
In His dear might prepared for weal or woe.
But hark! a grand, mysterious harmony:
It floods me like the deep and solemn sound
Of many waters.

. . . . . .

Angels of the Sacred Stair

Father, whose goodness none can know, but they
  Who see Thee face to face,
By man hath come the infinite display
  Of Thy victorious grace;
But fallen man—the creature of a day—
  Skills not that love to trace.
It needs, to tell the triumph Thou hast wrought,
An Angel's deathless fire, an Angel's reach of thought.

It needs that very Angel, who with awe,
  Amid the garden shade,
The great Creator in His sickness saw,
  Soothed by a creature's aid,
And agonized, as victim of the Law
  Which He Himself had made;
For who can praise Him in His depth and height,
But he who saw Him reel amid that solitary fight?

. . . . . .

Angel

Thy judgment now is near, for we are come
Into the veilèd presence of our God.

. . . . . .

Praise to His Name!
The eager spirit has darted from my hold,
And, with the intemperate energy of love,
Flies to the dear feet of Emmanuel;
But, ere it reach them, the keen sanctity,
Which with its effluence, like a glory, clothes
And circles round the Crucified, has seized,
And scorch'd, and shrivell'd it; and now it lies
Passive and still before the awful Throne.
O happy, suffering soul! for it is safe,
Consumed, yet quicken'd, by the glance of God.

Soul

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,
And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,
Told out for me.
There, motionless and happy in my pain,
Lone, not forlorn,—
There will I sing, my sad perpetual strain,
Until the morn.
There will I sing, and soothe my stricken breast,
Which ne'er can cease
To throb, and pine, and languish, till possest
Of its Sole Peace.
There will I sing my absent Lord and Love:—
Take me away,
That sooner I may rise, and go above,
And see Him in the truth of Everlasting day.

. . . . . .

Angel

Softly and gently, dearly ransom'd soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And, o'er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance.

Angels, to whom the willing task is given,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as thou liest;
And Masses on the earth, and prayers in heaven,
Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most Highest.

Farewell, but not for ever! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.

The Oratory. *January*, 1865.

WILLIAM BARNES

[Born in 1801 at Rushay, near Pentridge, Dorset; educated at an endowed school at Sturminster-Newton; entered the office of Mr. Dashwood, a solicitor of that townlet, in 1814 or 1815; left in 1818 for the office of Mr. T. Coombs, Dorchester. His first printed expression in verse was in *The Weekly Entertainer* in 1820. He took a school at Mere, Wiltshire, in 1823; married in 1827; opened a school at Dorchester in 1835; and in 1837 entered his name as a ten-years man at St. John's College, Cambridge. He was ordained in 1847. He gave up his school and was inducted rector of Winterborne Came in 1862, where he died October 7, 1886. His "Life" was published in the following year, by his daughter, Mrs. Baxter, writing under the name of "Leader Scott."

Besides articles in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1831–1843, papers in the *Retrospective Review*, 1853–1854, and minor prose works, he published *Poems in the Dorset Dialect*, 1844; *Poems partly of Rural Life*, 1846; *Hwomely Rhymes* (a second collection of Dorset Poems), 1850; *A Philological Grammar*, 1854; *A Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect*, 1863; *A Third Collection of Dorset Poems*, 1863; and *Poems of Rural Life in Common English*, 1868. An edition of the three series in one volume was brought out in 1879, and a selection by the present writer in 1908.]

The veil of a dialect, through which except in a few cases readers have to discern whatever of real poetry there may be in William Barnes, is disconcerting to many, and to some distasteful, chiefly, one thinks, for a superficial reason which has more to do with spelling than with the dialect itself. As long as the spelling of standard English is other than phonetic it is not obvious why that of the old Wessex language should be phonetic, except in a pronouncing dictionary. We have however to deal with Barnes's verse as he chose to write it, merely premising that his aim in the exact literation of Dorset words is not necessarily to exhibit humour and grotesqueness.

It often seemed strange to lovers of Barnes that he, a man of insight and reading, should have persisted year after year to sing in a tongue which, though a regular growth and not a provincial corruption, is indubitably fast perishing. He said that he could not

help it. But he may have seen the unwisdom of such self-limitation—at those times, let us suppose, when he appeared to be under an uncontrollable impulse to express his own feelings, and to convey an ampler interpretation of life than his rustic vehicle would carry unenlarged, which resulted in his putting into the mouths of husbandmen compound epithets that certainly no user of the dialect ever concocted out of his own brain, and subtle sentiments that would have astonished those husbandmen and their neighbours.

But though true dramatic artistry lies that way, the way of all who differentiate imaginative revelation from the blind transcripts of a reporter's note-book, it was probably from some misgivings on the score of permanence that now and then he would turn a lyric in "common English," and once or twice brought out a little volume so written as an experiment. As usual, the prepossessions of his cocksure critics would not allow them to tolerate what they had not been accustomed to, a new idea, and the specimens were coldly received; which seems to have discouraged him. Yet in the opinion of the present writer the ordinary language which, as a school-master, Barnes taught for nearly forty years, could soon have been moulded to verse as deftly as dialect by a man whose instinct it was to catch so readily the beat of hearts around him. I take as an example the lines (which I translate) on the husband who comes home from abroad to find his wife long dead:—

> "The rose was dust that bound her brow,
> Moth-eaten was her Sunday cape,
> Her frock was out of fashion now,
> Her shoes were dried up out of shape—
> Those shoes that once had glittered black
> Along the upland's beaten track;"

and his frequent phrases like that of the autumn sun "wandering wan," the "wide-horned cows," the "high-sunned" noons, the "hoarse cascade," the "hedgerow-bramble's swinging bow."

Barnes, in fact, surprising as it may seem to those who know him, and that but a little, as a user of dialect only, was an academic poet, akin to the school of Gray and Collins, rather than a spontaneous singer of rural songs in folk-language like Burns, or an extemporizer like the old balladists. His apparently simple unfoldings are as studied as the so-called simple Bible-narratives are studied; his rhymes and alliterations often cunningly schematic.

The speech of his ploughmen and milkmaids in his *Eclogues*—his own adopted name for these pieces—is as sound in its syntax as that of the Tityrus and Meliboeus of Virgil whom he had in mind, and his characters have often been likened to the shepherds and goatherds in the idylls of Theocritus.

Recognition came with the publication of the first series of Dorset poems in 1844, though some reviewers were puzzled whether to criticize them on artistic or philological grounds; later volumes however were felt to be the poetry of profound art by Coventry Patmore, F. T. Palgrave, H. M. Moule, and others. They saw that Barnes, behind his word-screen, had a quality of the great poets, a clear perception or instinct that human emotion is the primary stuff of poetry.

Repose and content mark nearly all of Barnes's verse; he shows little or none of the spirit of revolt which we find in Burns; nothing of the revolutionary politics of Béranger. He held himself artistically aloof from the ugly side of things—or perhaps shunned it unconsciously; and we escape in his pictures the sordid miseries that are laid bare in Crabbe, often to the destruction of charm. But though he does not probe life so deeply as the other parson-poet I have named, he conserves the poetic essence more carefully, and his reach in his highest moments, as exampled by such a poignant lyric as *The Wife a-lost*, or by the emotional music of *Woak Hill*, or *The Wind at the Door*, has been matched by few singers below the best.

THOMAS HARDY.

IN THE SPRING

My love is the maïd ov all maïdens,
  Though all mid be comely,
Her skin 's lik' the jessamy blossom
  A-spread in the Spring.

Her smile is so sweet as a baby's
  Young smile on his mother,
Her eyes be as bright as the dew drop
  A-shed in the Spring.

mid] may.

O grey-leafy pinks o' the geärden,
Now bear her sweet blossoms;
Now deck wi' a rwose-bud, O briar,
Her head in the Spring.

O light-rollèn wind, blow me hither
The vaïce ov her talkèn,
O bring vrom her veet the light doust
She do tread in the Spring.

O zun, meäke the gil'cups all glitter
In goold all around her,
An' meäke o' the deäisys' white flowers
A bed in the Spring.

O whissle, gaÿ birds, up bezide her,
In drong-waÿ an' woodlands,
O zing, swingèn lark, now the clouds
Be a-vled in the Spring!

Jenny out vrom Hwome

O wild-reävèn west winds! as you do roar on,
The elems do rock an' the poplars do ply,
An' weäve do dreve weäve in the dark-water'd pon',—
Oh! where do ye rise vrom, an' where do ye die?

O wild-reävèn winds! I do wish I could vlee
Wi' you, lik' a bird o' the clouds, up above
The ridge o' the hill an' the top o' the tree,
To where I do long vor, an' vo'k I do love.

Or else that in under theäse rock I could hear,
In the soft-zwellèn sounds you do leäve in your road,
Zome words you mid bring me, vrom tongues that be dear,
Vrom friends that do love me, all scatter'd abrode.

O wild-reävèn winds! if you ever do roar
By the house an' the elems vrom where I'm a-come,
Breathe up at the window, or call at the door,
An' tell you've a-voun' me a-thinkèn o' hwome.

vaïce] voice. doust] dust. drong-waÿ] hedged track. Be a-vled] have flown. reävèn] raving. ply] bend. weäve] wave. theäse] this. mid] might. a-voun'] found.

The Wife a-lost

Since I noo mwore do zee your feäce,
  Up steairs or down below,
I'll zit me in the lwonesome pleäce
  Where flat-bough'd beech do grow:
Below the beeches' bough, my love,
  Where you did never come,
An' I don't look to meet ye now,
  As I do look at hwome.

Since you noo mwore be at my zide,
  In walks in zummer het,
I'll goo alwone where mist do ride,
  Drough trees a-drippèn wet:
Below the raïn-wet bough, my love,
  Where you did never come,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now,
  As I do grieve at hwome.

Since now bezide my dinner-bwoard
  Your vaïce do never sound,
I'll eat the bit I can avword
  A-vield upon the ground;
Below the darksome bough, my love,
  Where you did never dine,
An' I don't grieve to miss ye now,
  As I at hwome do pine.

Since I do miss your vaïce an' feäce
  In praÿer at eventide,
I'll praÿ wi' woone sad vaïce vor greäce
  To goo where you do bide;
Above the tree an' bough, my love,
  Where you be gone avore,
An' be a-waïtèn vor me now,
  To come vor evermwore.

avword] afford.

Woak Hill

When sycamore leaves wer a-spreadèn
Green-ruddy in hedges,
Bezide the red doust o' the ridges,
A-dried at Woak Hill;

I pack'd up my goods, all a-sheenèn
Wi' long years o' handlèn,
On dousty red wheels ov a waggon,
To ride at Woak Hill.

The brown thatchen ruf o' the dwellèn
I then wer a-leävèn,
Had shelter'd the sleek head o' Meäry,
My bride at Woak Hill.

But now vor zome years, her light voot-vall
'S a-lost vrom the vloorèn.
To soon vor my jaÿ an' my children
She died at Woak Hill.

But still I do think that, in soul,
She do hover about us;
To ho vor her motherless children,
Her pride at Woak Hill.

Zoo—lest she should tell me hereafter
I stole off 'ithout her,
An' left her, uncall'd at house-riddèn,
To bide at Woak Hill—

I call'd her so fondly, wi' lippèns
All soundless to others,
An' took her wi' aïr-reachèn hand
To my zide at Woak Hill.

On the road I did look round, a-talkèn
To light at my shoulder,
An' then led her in at the doorway,
Miles wide vrom Woak Hill.

Woak] oak. doust] dust. jaÿ] joy. To ho vor] in anxious care for. house-riddèn] moving-house. lippèns] lip-movements. To light] to vacancy.

An' that 's why vo'k thought, vor a season,
My mind wer a-wandrèn
Wi' sorrow, when I wer so sorely
A-tried at Woak Hill.

But no; that my Meäry mid never
Behold herzelf slighted,
I wanted to think that I guided
My guide vrom Woak Hill.

The Widow's House

I went hwome in the dead o' the night,
When the vields wer all empty o' vo'k,
An' the tuns at their cool-winded height
Wer all dark, an' all cwold 'ithout smoke;
An' the heads o' the trees that I pass'd
Wer a-swaÿèn wi' low ruslèn sound,
An' the doust wer a-whirl'd wi' the blast,
Aye, a smeech wi' the wind on the ground.

Then I come by the young widow's hatch,
Down below the wold elem's tall head,
But noo vingers did lift up the latch,
Vor they all wer so still as the dead;
But inside, to a tree a-meäde vast,
Wer the childern's light swing, a-hung low,
An' a-rock'd by the brisk blowèn blast,
Aye, a-swung by the win' to an fro.

Vor the childern, wi' pillow-borne head,
Had vorgotten their swing on the lawn,
An' their father, asleep wi' the dead,
Had vorgotten his work at the dawn;
An' their mother, a vew stilly hours,
Had vorgotten where he slept so sound,
Where the wind wer a-sheäkèn the flow'rs,
Aye, the blast the feäir buds on the ground.

mid] might. tuns] chimneys. doust] dust. smeech] dust-cloud.
come] came. hatch] gate.

The Water Crowvoot

O small-feäc'd flow'r that now dost bloom
To stud wi' white the shallow Frome,
An' leäve the clote to spread his flow'r
On darksome pools o' stwoneless Stour,
When sof'ly-rizèn aïrs do cool
The water in the sheenèn pool,
Thy beds o' snow-white buds do gleam
So feäir upon the sky-blue stream
As whitest clouds a-hangèn high
Avore the blueness o' the sky;
An' there, at hand, the thin-heäir'd cows,
In aïry sheädes o' withy boughs,
Or up bezide the mossy raïls,
Do stan' an' zwing their heavy taïls,
The while the ripplèn stream do flow
Below the dousty bridge's bow;
An' quiv'rèn water-gleams do mock
The weäves, upon the sheäded rock;
An' up athirt the copèn stwone
The laïtrèn bwoy do leän alwone,
A-watchèn, wi' a stedvast look,
The vallèn waters in the brook,
The while the zand o' time do run
An' leäve his errand still undone.
An' oh! as long 's thy buds would gleam
Above the softly-slidèn stream,
While sparklèn zummer brooks do run
Below the lofty-climèn zun,
I only wish that thou could'st staÿ
Vor noo man's harm, an' all men's jaÿ.
But no, the waterman 'ull weäde
Thy water wi' his deadly bleäde,
To slay thee even in thy bloom,
Fair small-feäc'd flower o' the Frome.

clote] water-lily. athirt] across. copèn] coping. Laïtrèn] loitering.

Blackmwore Maïdens

The primwrose in the sheäde do blow,
The cowslip in the zun,
The thyme upon the down do grow,
The clote where streams do run;
An' where do pretty maïdens grow
An' blow, but where the tow'r
Do rise among the bricken tuns,
In Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you could zee their comely gaït,
An' pretty feäces' smiles,
A-trippèn on so light o' waïght,
An' steppèn off the stiles;
A-gwaïn to church, as bells do swing
An' ring within the tow'r,
You'd own the pretty maïdens' pleäce
Is Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you vrom Wimborne took your road,
To Stower or Paladore,
An' all the farmers' housen show'd
Their daughters at the door;
You'd cry to bachelors at hwome—
"Here, come: 'ithin an hour
You 'll vind ten maïdens to your mind
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

An' if you look'd 'ithin their door,
To zee em in their pleäce,
A-doèn housework up avore
Their smilèn mother's feäce;
You'd cry—"Why, if a man would wive
An' thrive, 'ithout a dow'r,
Then let en look en out a wife
In Blackmwore by the Stour."

clote] water-lily. tuns] chimneys. waïght] weight.

As I upon my road did pass
A school-house back in Maÿ,
There out upon the beäten grass
Wer maïdens at their plaÿ;
An' as the pretty souls did tweil
An' smile, I cried, "The flow'r
O' beauty, then, is still in bud
In Blackmwore by the Stour!"

The Morning Moon

'Twas when the op'ning dawn was still,
I took my lonely road, up hill,
Toward the eastern sky, in gloom,
Or touch'd with palest primrose bloom;
And there the moon at morning break,
Though yet unset, was gleaming weak,
And fresh'ning air began to pass,
All voiceless, over darksome grass,
Before the sun
Had yet begun
To dazzle down the morning moon.

By Maycreech hillock lay the cows,
Below the ash-trees' nodding boughs,
And water fell, from block to block
Of mossy stone, down Burncleeve rock,
By poplar-trees that stood, as slim
'S a feather, by the stream's green brim;
And down about the mill, that stood
Half darken'd off below the wood,
The rambling brook
From nook to nook
Flow'd on below the morning moon.

At mother's house I made a stand,
Where no one stirr'd with foot or hand;
No smoke above the chimney reek'd,
No winch above the well-mouth creak'd;

tweil] exert themselves.

No casement open'd out, to catch
The air below the eaves of thatch;
Nor down before her cleanly floor
Had open'd back her heavy door;
And there the hatch,
With fasten'd latch,
Stood close, below the morning moon:

And she, dear soul, so good and kind,
Had holden long, in my young mind,
Of holy thoughts the highest place
Of honour for her love and grace.
But now my wife, to heart and sight,
May seem to shine a fuller light;
And as the sun may rise to view,
To dim the moon, from pale to blue,
My comely bride
May seem to hide
My mother, now my morning moon.

White and Blue

My love is of comely height and straight,
And comely in all her ways and gait,
She shows in her face the rose's hue,
And her lids on her eyes are white on blue.

When Elemley club-men walk'd in May,
And folk came in clusters every way,
As soon as the sun dried up the dew,
And clouds in the sky were white on blue,

She came by the down with tripping walk,
By daisies and shining banks of chalk,
And brooks with the crowfoot flow'rs to strew
The sky-tinted water, white on blue;

She nodded her head as play'd the band,
She tapp'd with her foot as she did stand,
She danc'd in a reel, and wore all new
A skirt with a jacket, white and blue.

I singled her out from thin and stout,
From slender and stout I chose her out,
And what in the evening could I do
But give her my breast-knot white and blue?

The Wind at the Door

As daylight darken'd on the dewless grass,
There still, with no one come by me,
To stay awhile at home by me,
Within the house, now dumb by me,
I sat me still as eveningtide did pass.

And there a windblast shook the rattling door,
And seem'd, as wind did moan without,
As if my love alone without,
And standing on the stone without,
Had there come back with happiness once more.

I went to-door, and out from trees, above
My head, upon the blast by me,
Sweet blossoms there were cast by me,
As if my love had pass'd by me,
And flung them down, a token of her love.

Sweet blossoms of the tree where now I mourn,
I thought, if you did blow for her,
For apples that should grow for her,
And fall red-ripe below for her,
Oh! then how happy I should see you kern.

But no. Too soon my fond illusion broke,
No comely soul in white like her,
No fair one, tripping light like her,
No wife of comely height like her,
Went by, but all my grief again awoke.

AUBREY DE VERE

[Aubrey Thomas de Vere was born in January, 1814, at Curragh Chase, Limerick, the third son of Sir Aubrey de Vere, second Baronet, and of his wife who was a Spring Rice. He was educated privately at home, and after 1832 at Trinity College, Dublin. A few years afterwards he paid long visits to England and became intimate with Tennyson, Monckton Milnes, and many distinguished Cambridge men, and afterwards saw a good deal of Wordsworth, Sara Coleridge and Carlyle, while his chief friend from that time to the end of his life was Sir Henry Taylor. In 1842 he published *The Waldenses, and other Poems*, which was followed next year by *The Search after Proserpine*. He was deeply religious; and after witnessing the horrors of the Irish famine in 1846 he began to turn his thoughts to Roman Catholicism, and was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1851, when he was on his way to Italy in company with H. E. Manning. For a few years he held a Professorship, under Newman, in the new Catholic University in Dublin, and in 1857 he published *May Carols*, and other volumes followed. He retired from the University in 1858, and afterwards lived for the most part at Curragh Chase, where in 1902 he died unmarried, at the age of eighty-eight. In 1897 he published a volume of Recollections, and after his death a Memoir of him was written by Mr. Wilfrid Ward.]

Many people still remember with affection the venerable figure of Aubrey de Vere, most devout of Catholics and most amiably patriotic of Irishmen. His was "an old age serene and bright," and at over eighty years of age he still retained the feelings and the instincts of a poet. But throughout the second half of his long life his two predominant passions were religion and Ireland; his poems written in these years, as he says in his Recollections, were almost exclusively "intended to illustrate religious philosophy or early Irish history." And these poems may almost be regarded as interludes in a life greatly occupied with the Irish political and economic problems of the time, to the discussion of which he frequently contributed. But as a young man poetry—pure poetry—filled a much larger place in his thoughts and activities; naturally enough, for he was a poet's son who up to the age of twenty had lived in almost daily intercourse with his father Sir Aubrey,

whose poetical style and outlook, moreover—as will be recognized by any one who reads his plays *Julian the Apostate* and *Mary Tudor*—had a marked affinity to his own. In the days of his early productiveness, too, Aubrey de Vere mingled with the world of London and Cambridge, especially with the men of letters, such as Tennyson and Monckton Milnes, and above all with his intimate friend Henry Taylor. The Lives of several of these men abound with references to him, implying the most cordial intellectual intercourse; in that of Tennyson there are many and in Henry Taylor's *Autobiography* many more. Again, the three volumes of *Critical Essays*, which were written at many different dates though they were only collected in 1887–9, show how deeply he had been interested in poetry and how excellent a critic he was. He tells us in his *Recollections* that Byron was his first admiration, but was instantly displaced when Sir Aubrey put Wordsworth's *Laodamia* into his hands. It was with him as with Tennyson, in whose *Memoir* it is recorded that "he was dominated by Byron till he was seventeen, when he put him away altogether." *Laodamia* converted de Vere; from that moment he was a Wordsworthian, though not an imitator; on the contrary the charming little volume called *The Search after Proserpine, and other Poems* (1843) shows a gift more lyrical than philosophical, owing more to the influence of Shelley and the Greeks than to that of Rydal Mount.

Several of the extracts that follow are taken from that book, because it is hard to find in his later writings anything so spontaneous, so musical as the best of these poems, and because the volume shows Aubrey de Vere in the stage when poetry filled his soul, when he saw that there were bigger things in the world, in history, and in literature, than the political problems of the day, and when even Religion did not urge him to express her mysteries in verse. Seldom has the spell of Greece been exercised with greater effect than it was upon young de Vere, as he shows in the title-poem, and in *Lines written under Delphi:* poems which made old Landor, in 1848, beg him to "reascend with me the steeps of Greece" and to take no heed of Ireland—a country of which the old man writes in terms unfit for ears polite. The curious thing is that this love for Greece and Greek tradition, which rings more true than anything in *Childe Harold*, seems to have clean passed away from Aubrey de Vere after he became possessed with the religious passion. There is not a single mention of the travels to Greece in the volume of *Recollections*, and in the well-known *May*

Carols—May being the month of Mary—he admits that even the descriptive pieces are "an attempt towards a Christian rendering of external nature."

The Coleridge poem here quoted is interesting both as an emotional utterance and as a piece of criticism; and the sonnets deserve their place as an expression of de Vere's intense love for his father, of his regard for his brother poets, and of his religious faith.

EDITOR.

[From *The Search after Proserpine*]

FOUNTAIN NYMPHS

1

Proserpina was playing
  In the soft Sicilian clime,
'Mid a thousand damsels maying,
  All budding to their prime:
From their regions azure-blazing
The Immortal Concourse gazing
  Bent down, and sought in vain
Another earthly shape so meet with them to reign.

2

The steep blue arch above her,
  In Jove's own smiles arrayed,
Shone mild, and seemed to love her:
  His steeds Apollo stayed:
Soon as the God espied her
Nought else he saw beside her,
  Though in that happy clime
A thousand maids were verging to the fulness of their prime.

3

Old venerable Ocean
  Against the meads uprolled
With ever-young emotion
  His tides of blue and gold:
He had called with pomp and pæan
From his well-beloved Ægean
  All billows to one shore,
To fawn around her footsteps and in murmurs to adore.

4

Proserpina was playing
  Sicilian flowers among;
Amid the tall flowers straying.
  Alas! she strayed too long!
Sometimes she bent and kissed them,
Sometimes her hands caressed them,
  And sometimes, one by one,
She gathered them and tenderly enclosed them in her zone.

5

Lay upon your lips your fingers—
  Ceres comes, and full of woe;
Sad she comes, and often lingers:
  Well that grief divine I know:
Lay upon your lips your fingers;
Crush not, as you run, the grass;
Let the little bells of glass
  On the fountain blinking
Burst, but ring not till she pass,
  Down in silence sinking.
By the green scarf arching o'er her,
  By her mantle yellow-pale,
By those blue weeds bent before her,
  Bent as in a gale,
Well I know her—hush, descend—
Hither her green-tracked footsteps wend.

* * * * * * *

Strophe

Proserpina once more
  Will come to us a-Maying;
Sicilian meadows o'er
  Low-singing and light-playing.
The wintry durance past,
Delight will come at last:
Proserpina will come to us—
  Will come to us a-Maying.

Antistrophe

Sullen skies to-day,
  Sunny skies to-morrow;
November steals from May,
  And May from her doth borrow;
Griefs—Joys—in Time's strange dance
Interchangeably advance;
The sweetest joys that come to us
  Come sweeter for past sorrow.

COLERIDGE

His eye saw all things in the symmetry
Of true and just proportion; and his ear
  That inner tone could hear
Which flows beneath the outer: therefore he
Was as a mighty shell, fashioning all
The winds to one rich sound, ample and musical.

Yet dim that eye with gazing upon heaven;
Wearied with vigils, and the frequent birth
  Of tears when turned to earth:
Therefore, though farthest ken to him was given,
Near things escaped him: through them—as a gem
Diaphanous—he saw; and therefore saw not them.

Moreover, men whom sovereign wisdom teaches
That God not less in humblest forms abides
  Than those the great veil hides,
Such men a tremor of bright reverence reaches;
And thus, confronted ever with high things,
Like cherubim they hide their eyes between their wings.

No loftier, purer soul than his hath ever
With awe revolved the planetary page,
  From infancy to age,
Of Knowledge; sedulous and proud to give her
The whole of his great heart for her own sake;
For what she is; not what she does, or what can make.

And mighty Voices from afar came to him:
Converse of trumpets held by cloudy forms,
And speech of choral storms:
Spirits of night and noontide bent to woo him:
He stood the while, lonely and desolate
As Adam, when he ruled the world, yet found no mate.

His loftiest thoughts were but like palms uplifted,
Aspiring, yet in supplicating guise;
His sweetest songs were sighs:
Adown Lethean streams his spirit drifted,
Under Elysian shades from poppied bank
With Amaranths massed in dark luxuriance dank.

Coleridge, farewell! That great and grave transition
Which may not Priest, or King, or Conqueror spare,
And yet a Babe can bear,
Has come to thee. Through life a goodly vision
Was thine; and time it was thy rest to take.
Soft be the sound ordained thy sleep to break—
When thou art waking, wake me, for thy Master's sake!

1839.

[From *May Carols*]

II. 7

Stronger and steadier every hour
The pulses of the season's glee
As higher climbs that vernal Power
Which rules the azure revelry.

Trees that from winter's grey eclipse
Of late but pushed their topmost plume
Or felt with green-touched finger-tips
For spring, their perfect robes assume.

Like one that reads not one that spells
The unvarying rivulet onward run:
And bird to bird from leafier cells
Sends forth more leisurely response.

Through gorse-gilt coverts bounds the deer;
The gorse, whose latest splendours won
Make all the fulgent wolds appear
Bright as the pastures of the sun.

A balmier zephyr curls the wave;
More purple flames o'er ocean dance;
And the white breaker by the cave
Falls with more cadenced resonance;

While, vague no more, the mountains stand
With quivering line or hazy hue,
But drawn with finer firmer hand,
And settling into deeper blue.

II. 30

A sweet exhaustion seems to hold
In spells of calm the shrouded eve:
The gorse itself a beamless gold
Puts forth: yet nothing seems to grieve.

The dewy chaplets hang on air;
The willowy fields are silver-grey;
Sad odours wander here and there;
And yet we feel that it is May.

Relaxed and with a broken flow
From dripping bowers low carols swell
In mellower, glassier tones, as though
They mounted through a bubbling well.

The crimson orchis scarce sustains
Upon its drenched and drooping spire
The burden of the warm soft rains;
The purple hills grow nigh and nigher.

Nature, suspending lovely toils,
On expectations lovelier broods,
Listening, with lifted hand, while coils
The flooded rivulet through the woods.

She sees, drawn out in vision clear,
A world with summer radiance drest
And all the glories of that year
Still sleeping in her sacred breast.

III. 4

A sudden sun-burst in the woods
But late sad Winter's palace dim!
O'er quickening boughs and bursting buds
Pacific glories shoot and swim.

As when some heart, grief-darkened long,
Conclusive joy by force invades,
So swift the new-born splendours throng;
Such lustre swallows up the shades.

The sun we see not; but his fires
From stem to stem obliquely smite
Till all the forest aisle respires
The golden-tongued and myriad light:

The caverns blacken as their brows
With floral fire are fringed: but all
Yon sombre vault of meeting boughs
Turns to a golden fleece its pall,

As o'er it breeze-like music rolls:
O Spring, thy limit-line is crossed!
O Earth, some orb of singing Souls
Brings down to thee *thy* Pentecost!

[From *Mediæval Records and Sonnets*]

(BROWNING)

Mourn, Italy, with England mourn since both
He sang with song's discriminating love;
Thy towers that flash the wooded crag above;
Thy trellised vineyard's purple overgrowth;
Thy matin balm; thy noontide's pleasing sloth;

Thy convent bell, dim lake, and homeward dove;
Thine evening star that through the bowered alcove
Silvers the white flight of the circling moth.
He sang thy best and worst; false love, fierce war,
Renaissance craft, child-graces, saintly Art,
Old pomps from "Casa Guidi's" Windows seen:
There dwelt he happy; there that Minstrel-Queen
Who shared his poet-crown but gladdened more
To hold unshared her Poet's manly heart.

(TENNYSON)

None sang of Love more nobly; few as well;
Of Friendship none with pathos so profound;
Of Duty sternliest-proved when myrtle-crowned;
Of English grove and rivulet, mead and dell;
Great Arthur's Legend he alone dared tell;
Milton and Dryden feared to tread that ground;
For him alone o'er Camelot's faery bound
The "horns of Elf-land" blew their magic spell.
Since Shakespeare and since Wordsworth none hath sung
So well his England's greatness; none hath given
Reproof more fearless or advice more sage:
None inlier taught how near to earth is Heaven;
With what vast concords Nature's harp is strung;
How base false pride; faction's fanatic rage.

SIR FRANCIS DOYLE

[Sir Francis Hastings Doyle, 2nd Baronet; born 1810; educated at Eton and Christ Church; 1st Class Lit. Hum., Fellow of All Souls. Was Receiver-General of Customs, 1846–69, then Commissioner of Customs till 1883. Published *Miscellaneous Verses*, 1834, and some other volumes of verse at intervals; the greater part were republished in one volume in 1883. Was appointed Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1867, and held the post ten years, publishing two volumes of lectures. Died 1888.]

Sir Francis Doyle came of a family of soldiers; the *Dictionary* mentions five of his near relatives who were generals and colonels. It is not surprising, then, that his verses, when he came to write and publish, dealt largely with action, and that the poem by which he is best known celebrates the heroism of a British soldier. But he himself lived the quiet life of a civilian office-holder—he was Receiver-General of Customs for over twenty years of his middle life. But he was distinguished intellectually in his youth, at Eton and Oxford; his first class (1832) and his Fellowship of All Souls, and his close intimacy with Gladstone and a number of other young leaders, which began in the Eton Debating Society, marked him out as one of the chosen. He and Gladstone, however, parted company when the latter joined the Liberals, and Doyle's Toryism only grew stronger with years. In 1883, when the Liberals were planning memorable measures, he wrote: "I try not to despair of the future of my country," this lugubrious mood taking no account of the fact that the government of Egypt had just passed into British hands; and many of his verses, at all dates, contain little hits at Whigs, past and present. But it must be granted that, beyond a general conservatism in their outlook, the Essays and Lectures, which he delivered as Professor of Poetry at Oxford before and after 1870, do not mix party with literature, and the same may be said of the Poems. These latter are honest and strenuous, though perhaps in many cases they do not rise above the commonplace; but his translations from Pindar and Sophocles, and from several French poets, are excellent; *The Private of the Buffs* is, in its way, a classic, and the selections which we give

from the early poem *The Doncaster St. Leger* are a spirited reflexion of feelings universal in West Yorkshire seventy years ago. They are a sort of Yorkshire counterpart of the racing verses of the Australian poet Lindsay Gordon which we print elsewhere.

EDITOR.

FROM "THE DONCASTER ST. LEGER"

A hundred yards have glided by,
  And they settle to the race,
More keen becomes each straining eye,
  More terrible the pace.
Unbroken yet o'er the gravel road
Like maddening waves the troop has flowed,
  But the speed begins to tell;
And Yorkshire sees, with eye of fear,
The Southron stealing from the rear.
  Ay! mark his action well!
Behind he is, but what repose!
How steadily and clean he goes!
What latent speed his limbs disclose!
What power in every stride he shows!
They see, they feel, from man to man
The shivering thrill of terror ran,
And every soul instinctive knew
It lay between the mighty two.
The world without, the sky above,
  Have glided from their straining eyes—
Future and past, and hate and love,
  The life that wanes, the friend that dies,
E'en grim remorse, who sits behind
Each thought and motion of the mind,
These now are nothing, Time and Space
Lie in the rushing of the race;
As with keen shouts of hope and fear
They watch it in its wild career.
Still far ahead of the glittering throng
Dashes the eager mare along,
And round the turn, and past the hill,
Slides up the Derby winner still.
The twenty-five that lay between

Are blotted from the stirring scene,
And the wild cries which rang so loud,
Sink by degrees throughout the crowd,
To one deep humming, like the tremulous roar
Of seas remote along a northern shore.

In distance dwindling to the eye
Right opposite the stand they lie,
And scarcely seem to stir;
Though an Arab scheich his wives would give
For a single steed, that with them could live
Three hundred yards, without the spur.
But though so indistinct and small,
You hardly see them move at all,
There are not wanting signs, which show
Defeat is busy as they go.
Look how the mass, which rushed away
As full of spirit as the day,
So close compacted for a while,
Is lengthening into single file.
Now inch by inch it breaks, and wide
And spreading gaps the line divide.
As forward still, and far away
Undulates on the tired array,
Gay colours, momently less bright,
Fade flickering on the gazer's sight,
Till keenest eyes can scarcely trace
The homeward ripple of the race.
Care sits on every lip and brow.
"Who leads? who fails? how goes it now?"
One shooting spark of life intense,
One throb of refluent suspense,
And a far rainbow-coloured light
Trembles again upon the sight.
Look to yon turn! Already there
Gleams the pink and black of the fiery mare,
And through *that*, which was but now a gap,
Creeps on the terrible white cap.
Half-strangled in each throat, a shout
Wrung from their fevered spirits out,
Booms through the crowd like muffled drums,

"His jockey moves on him. He comes!"
Then momently like gusts, you heard,
"He 's sixth—he 's fifth—he 's fourth—he 's third";
And on, like some glancing meteor-flame,
The stride of the Derby winner came.

And during all that anxious time,
(Sneer as it suits you at my rhyme)
The earnestness became sublime;
Common and trite as is the scene,
At once so thrilling, and so mean,
To him who strives his heart to scan,
And feels the brotherhood of man,
That needs *must* be a mighty minute,
When a crowd has but one soul within it.
As some bright ship, with every sail
Obedient to the urging gale,
Darts by vext hulls, which side by side,
Dismasted on the raging tide,
Are struggling onward, wild and wide,
Thus, through the reeling field he flew,
And near, and yet more near he drew;
Each leap seems longer than the last,
Now—now—the second horse is past,
And the keen rider of the mare,
With haggard looks of feverish care,
Hangs forward on the speechless air,
By steady stillness nursing in
The remnant of her speed to win.
One other bound—one more—'tis done;
Right up to her the horse has run,
And head to head, and stride for stride,
New market's hope, and Yorkshire's pride,
Like horses harnessed side by side,
  Are struggling to the goal.
Ride! gallant son of Ebor, ride!
For the dear honour of the north,
Stretch every bursting sinew forth,
  Put out thy inmost soul,—
And with knee, and thigh, and tightened rein,
Lift in the mare by might and main.

The Private of the Buffs

"Some Seiks, and a private of the Buffs, having remained behind with the grog-carts, fell into the hands of the Chinese. On the next morning they were brought before the authorities, and commanded to perform the *kotou*. The Seiks obeyed; but Moyse, the English soldier, declaring that he would not prostrate himself before any Chinaman alive, was immediately knocked upon the head, and his body thrown on a dunghill."—See China Correspondent of *The Times*.

Last night, among his fellow roughs,
He jested, quaffed, and swore;
A drunken private of the Buffs,
Who never looked before.
To-day, beneath the foeman's frown,
He stands in Elgin's place,
Ambassador from Britain's crown,
And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught,
Bewildered, and alone,
A heart, with English instinct fraught,
He yet can call his own.
Ay, tear his body limb from limb,
Bring cord, or axe, or flame:
He only knows, that not through *him*
Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish [1] hop-fields round him seem'd,
Like dreams, to come and go;
Bright leagues of cherry-blossom gleam'd,
One sheet of living snow;
The smoke, above his father's door,
In gray soft eddyings hung:
Must he then watch it rise no more,
Doom'd by himself, so young?

Yes, honour calls!—with strength like steel
He put the vision by.
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel;
An English lad must die.

[1] The Buffs, or East Kent Regiment.

And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,
With knee to man unbent,
Unfaltering on its dreadful brink,
To his red grave he went.

Vain, mightiest fleets of iron framed;
Vain, those all-shattering guns;
Unless proud England keep, untamed,
The strong heart of her sons.
So, let his name through Europe ring—
A man of mean estate,
Who died, as firm as Sparta's king,
Because his soul was great.

LORD HOUGHTON

[Richard Monckton Milnes was born June 19, 1809, the only son of Robert Milnes, M. P., of Fryston and Bawtry in Yorkshire, and of Henrietta Monckton, daughter of the fourth Viscount Galway. Delicacy in boyhood kept him from a public school, but in 1827 he entered at Trinity College, Cambridge. Later he studied at Bonn, and spent several years in Italy, where his parents were then living. In 1837 he was elected for Pontefract as a Conservative, but after 1846 attached himself loosely to the Liberal Party, maintaining throughout a special interest in social reform. In 1851 he married Annabel Crewe, daughter of the second Lord Crewe, and in 1863 was raised to the Peerage as Lord Houghton. He lost his wife in 1874, and died of angina pectoris, at Vichy in France, on August 11, 1885. Of poetry he published in 1834 *Memorials of a Tour in Greece*, and in 1838 *Memorials of a Residence on the Continent, and Historical Poems*. In 1840 appeared *Poetry for the People*, and in 1844 *Poems, Legendary and Historical*, and *Palm Leaves*. A collected edition was issued in 1876. His principal prose works, besides a number of pamphlets, &c., were the *Life of Keats*, published in 1848, and *Monographs, Personal and Social*, in 1873.]

In 1838 Henry Crabb Robinson noted in his Diary how Landor had maintained that "Milnes is the greatest poet now living in England." Landor could be an exuberant critic; and even though he purposely ignored the last flickerings of Southey's existence and Wordsworth's barren old age, five years earlier Tennyson had published *The Lotos-Eaters* and *The Palace of Art;* while *Paracelsus* had lately shown careful critics that another new-comer had to be reckoned with. Still it is interesting to recall the verdict to a generation which has nearly forgotten Lord Houghton's poetry, and remembers him principally as a witty and genial man of the world, and promoter of some useful public reforms during the first forty years of Queen Victoria's reign.

Whatever germs of poetry were inborn in Richard Milnes were sure of sympathetic cultivation in the famous coterie of the late twenties at Trinity, Cambridge, where the three Tennysons, the two Lushingtons, Arthur Hallam, and Richard Trench talked and

wrote. The devotion of the whole circle to Keats and Shelley, which produced the first English issue of *Adonais*, and dispatched Hallam, Milnes, and Sunderland to the Oxford Union as champions of its author's art, was linked with an enthusiasm for Wordsworth scarcely less ardent, and doubtless in some respects corrective. Milnes was no copyist; but until the time came when Eastern travel gave him something of a new vision, and therewith something of a fresh manner, the influence of the older masters is not less patent in his work than in the earlier poems of Alfred Tennyson. In the last year of his life, at each of two gatherings held in honour of Gray and of Wordsworth, he dwelt on the disadvantages under which the poets of sentiment labour in comparison with the supreme poets of passion and of imagery. As he himself admitted, any such classification of schools and of individuals must be arbitrary and imperfect; and no doubt qualitative analysis on these lines of such utterly different masterpieces as *Lycidas*, the *Ode on Cromwell's Return from Ireland*, the two poems *To Mary Unwin*, and *Ulysses*, would not be easy. We may be certain, however, that Milnes would have numbered himself among the poets of sentiment, treading more nearly in the path of Wordsworth than any other. Indeed, with some of Wordsworth's human sight, and touches of his sober emotion, and without ever plunging into the incredible bathos of Wordsworth at his worst, he now and then spoiled a stanza by a pedestrian phrase, or a cadence more befitting prose. One material limitation parted the disciple from the prophet. Country-bred though he was, it was Milnes's misfortune to possess little taste for country life or for rural pleasures; and while his Southern and Eastern poems exhibit some notable pictures of sky and landscape, it was into the hidden heart of man, not of Nature, that he strove to look, and the revelation of humanity that he desired to widen. He laboured in a special sense to make his work, in Matthew Arnold's much-discussed phrase, "A criticism of life," though he never professed to formulate a whole philosophy of man's existence. The poems of which he himself thought most—*The Flight of Youth* (which he placed first), *Never Return*, *The Men of Old*, *The Long Ago*, and *Half Truth*—are all poems of sentiment in his meaning of the word, and the notes of passion are rare throughout. Indeed in most of his thoughtful poetry the lights burn somewhat low; while all his life through he himself bubbled over with humour, and extracted continual enjoyment from the most varied scenes and from the

most diverse social conditions. For what sounds like a paradox is indeed almost a commonplace—that utterance in verse often expresses a reaction of the soul against the moral and intellectual elements by which a man is known in his daily life. *Never Return*, a poem in blank verse of nearly 150 lines, and therefore too long for this Selection, describes a gathering of friends under an Italian sky, and the eternal conflict between the outlook of sanguine youth and the cooler philosophy of mature years. It is marked by singular grace of expression, and some fine landscape painting.

The memorials of Milnes's travel in Greece and of residence in Italy have lost some of their freshness with the passage of time. The Greece of Byron is more remote from us than the Greece of Pericles, and the Brownings sang of Italy with fuller knowledge and deeper devotion; but the Eastern volume of *Palm Leaves*, as Lord Houghton himself came to see when he reissued his poetry, deserves a more lasting recollection. His travels in 1842 were not those of a Burton, or even of a Mr. Wilfrid Blunt; but it may be questioned whether any English poet has obtained a closer perception of the Near East, or of the spirit by which the followers of the Prophet live and move. Such poems as *Mohammedanism*, *The Hareem*, *The Tent*, some of the *Eastern Thoughts*, and the tales told in *The Kiosk*, remain vivid and authentic after all the turmoils and changes that have harassed the land which inspired them.

As might be anticipated amid a life of variety and movement, much of Milnes's verse, and not a little of the most original, is of what is called the "occasional" type. The term is sometimes used with a note of depreciation, and the very highest poetry in the language rarely conforms to it; but no apology can be needed for appearance in the train of some of Milton's and Wordsworth's noblest sonnets, to say nothing of Burns or Cowper or Byron. Milnes's *Monument for Scutari*, *A Spanish Anecdote*, the two sonnets on *Princess Borghese*, and his *in memoriam* verses on *Dryden and Thackeray*, *Mary and Agnes Berry*, and *Mrs. Denison*, are all excellent in their kind. The blended feeling and urbanity in such lines as these on the Misses Berry awaken regret that he did not dig deeper in the vein of Praed or of Thackeray himself.

"Farewell, dear Ladies: in your loss
We feel the past recede,
The gap our hands could almost cross
Is now a gulf indeed;

Ye, and the days in which your claims
And charms were early known,
Lose substance, and ye stand as names
That History makes its own.

Farewell! the pleasant social page
Is read, but ye remain
Examples of ennobled age,
Long life without a stain;
A lesson to be scorned by none,
Least by the wise and brave,
Delightful as the winter sun
That gilds this open grave:"

Once only, in *The Brownie*, did Milnes reveal a sombre power which makes that poem admirable in its *genre* and will keep it alive. The other and longer *Legends* and *Narrative Poems* are not specially noticeable.

Some may be tempted to ask whether the writer of poetry stamped by so competent a critic as Mr. Aubrey de Vere as "rich in fancy, grave-hearted, in an unusual degree thoughtful and full of pathos," might not have climbed to great heights if, like Wordsworth and Tennyson, he had laid aside other ambitions and enjoyments, and devoted himself to imaginative labours.

Experience does not favour such a possibility. "Mute inglorious Miltons" may rest in the country churchyard, but not on the benches of the House of Commons. *Quisque suos patimur manes*, and it would be hard to name an instance where absorption in politics or business or society has affected either the quality or the volume of poetry belonging to the first class—using that phrase in an extended sense so as to include Hugo or Browning, as well as Dante or Milton. The fact is that the creative impulse is so powerful and so pleasurable to those who enjoy it even in small measure, that though it may sometimes dissipate itself in the sands of indolence, its flow can scarcely be diverted into another deep channel of active life. So while much unwanted verse goes to the printers, little poetry, if any, is left unwritten by those who can write indeed. And if Milnes issued no new volume after he was five-and-thirty, it was not through the expulsion of poetry from its throne by the pressure of other interests so much as through their admission by the partial abdication of poetry. To some of his relatives public

life seemed to be the sole rational pursuit for a clever man of his upbringing; but such pressure would not have operated but for the decay in himself of that lyrical faculty of youth which, in its constant occurrence and its ephemeral richness, always excited his wonder as a phenomenon and his sympathy as a personal incident. In his own stronger work the gift greatly transcended the mere outflow of musical verse; indeed, as Frederick Locker wrote after his death: "His poetry depended less on the way the thought was expressed than on the thought itself." But, as he himself observed in 1876, "It is in truth the continuance and sustenance of the poetic faculty which is the test of its magnitude: when it grows with a man's growth in active life, when it is not checked or smothered by the cares of ordinary existence, or by the successes or failures of a career, when it derives force and variety from the experiences of society and the internal history of the individual mind, then, and then only, can it be surely estimated as part of that marvellous manifestation of Art and Nature, the Poetry of the World." These laurels cannot be claimed for Lord Houghton, and he would never have claimed them for himself. But at a time when many new lamps of verse are lit which are by no means beacon-fires, it is not amiss to rekindle the steady flame of his poetry by this selection.

CREWE.

MOHAMMEDANISM

One God the Arabian Prophet preached to man,
  One God the Orient still
Adores through many a realm of mighty span,
  A God of Power and Will—

A God that shrouded in His lonely light
  Rests utterly apart
From all the vast Creations of His might,
  From Nature, Man, and Art:—

A Being in whose solitary hand
  All other beings weigh
No more than in the potter's reckoning stand
  The workings of his clay:—

A Power that at its pleasure will create,
To save or to destroy;
And to eternal pain predestinate,
As to eternal joy:—

An unconditioned, irrespective Will,
Demanding simple awe,
Beyond all principles of good or ill,
Above idea of law.

No doctrine here of perfect Love divine,
To which the bounds belong
Only of that unalterable line
Disparting right from wrong:—

A love that while it must not regulate
The issues of free-will,
By its own sacrifice can expiate
The penalties of ill.

No message here of man redeemed from sin,
Of fallen nature raised,
By inward strife and moral discipline
Higher than e'er debased,—

Of the immense parental heart that yearns
From highest heaven to meet
The poorest wandering spirit that returns
To its Creator's feet.

No Prophet here by common essence bound
At once to God and man,
Author Himself and part of the profound
And providential plan:

Himself the ensample of unuttered worth,
Himself the living sign,
How by God's grace the fallen sons of earth
May be once more divine.

Thus in the faiths old Heathendom that shook
Were different powers of strife;
Mohammed's truth lay in a holy Book,
Christ's in a sacred Life.

So, while the world rolls on from change to change
And realms of thought expand,
The Letter stands without expanse or range,
Stiff as a dead man's hand;

While, as the life-blood fills the growing form,
The Spirit Christ has shed
Flows through the ripening ages fresh and warm,
More felt than heard or read.

And therefore, though ancestral sympathies,
And closest ties of race,
May guard Mohammed's precept and decrees,
Through many a tract of space,

Yet in the end the tight-drawn line must break,
The sapless tree must fall,
Nor let the form one time did well to take
Be tyrant over all.

The tide of things rolls forward, surge on surge,
Bringing the blessèd hour,
When in Himself the God of Love shall merge
The God of Will and Power.

The Flight of Youth

No, though all the winds that lie
In the circle of the sky
Trace him out, and pray and moan,
Each in its most plaintive tone,—
No, though Earth be split with sighs,
And all the Kings that reign
Over Nature's mysteries
Be our faithfullest allies,—
All—all is vain:
They may follow on his track,
But He never will come back—
Never again!

Youth is gone away,
Cruel, Cruel youth,

Full of gentleness and ruth
Did we think him all his stay;
How had he the heart to wreak
Such a woe on us so weak,
He that was so tender-meek?
How could he be made to learn
To find pleasure in our pain?
Could he leave us to return
Never again!

Bow your heads very low,
Solemn-measured be your paces,
Gathered up in grief your faces,
Sing sad music as ye go;
In disordered handfuls strew
Strips of cypress, sprigs of rue;
In your hands be borne the bloom,
Whose long petals once and only
Look from their pale-leavèd tomb
In the midnight lonely;
Let the nightshade's beaded coral
Fall in melancholy moral
Your wan brows around,
While in very scorn ye fling
The amaranth upon the ground
As an unbelievèd thing;
What care we for its fair tale
Of beauties that can never fail,
Glories that can never wane?
No such blooms are on the track
He has past, who will come back
Never again!

Alas! we know not how he went,
We knew not he was going,
For had our tears once found a vent,
We had stayed him with their flowing.
It was as an earthquake, when
We awoke and found him gone,
We were miserable men,
We were hopeless, every one!
Yes, he must have gone away

In his guise of every day,
In his common dress, the same
Perfect face and perfect frame;
For in feature, for in limb,
Who could be compared to him?
Firm his step, as one who knows
He is free where'er he goes,
And withal as light of spring
As the arrow from the string;
His impassioned eye had got
Fire which the sun had not;
Silk to feel, and gold to see,
Fell his tresses full and free,
Like the morning mists that glide
Soft adown the mountain's side;
Most delicious 'twas to hear
When his voice was thrilling clear
As a silver-hearted bell.
Or to follow its low swell,
When, as dreamy winds that stray
Fainting 'mid Æolian chords,
Inner music seemed to play
Symphony to all his words;
In his hand was poised a spear,
Deftly poised, as to appear
Resting of its proper will,—
Thus a merry hunter still,
And engarlanded with bay,
Must our Youth have gone away,
Though we half remember now,
He had borne some little while
Something mournful in his smile—
Something serious on his brow:
Gentle Heart, perhaps he knew
The cruel deed he was about to do!

Now, between us all and Him
There are rising mountains dim,
Forests of uncounted trees,
Spaces of unmeasured seas:
Think of Him how gay of yore

We made sunshine out of shade,—
Think with Him how light we bore
All the burden sorrow laid;
All went happily about Him,—
How shall we toil on without Him?
How without his cheering eye
Constant strength enbreathing ever?
How without Him standing by
Aiding every hard endeavour?
For when faintness or disease
Had usurped upon our knees,
If he deigned our lips to kiss
With those living lips of his,
We were lightened of our pain,
We were up and hale again:—
Now, without one blessing glance
From his rose-lit countenance,
We shall die, deserted men,—
And not see him, even then!

We are cold, very cold,—
All our blood is drying old,
And a terrible heart-dearth
Reigns for us in heaven and earth:
Forth we stretch our chilly fingers
In poor effort to attain
Tepid embers, where still lingers
Some preserved warmth, in vain.
Of! if Love, the Sister dear
Of Youth that we have lost,
Come not in swift pity here,
Come not, with a host
Of Affections, strong and kind,
To hold up our sinking mind,
If She will not, of her grace,
Take her Brother's holy place,
And be to us, at least, a part
Of what he was, in Life and Heart,
The faintness that is on our breath
Can have no other end but Death.

(1833.)

Moments

I lie in a heavy trance,
With a world of dream without me
Shapes of shadow dance,
In wavering bands about me;
But, at times, some mystic things
Appear in this phantom lair,
That almost seem to me visitings
Of Truth known elsewhere:
The world is wide,—these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

A prayer in an hour of pain,
Begun in an undertone,
Then lowered, as it would fain
Be heard by the heart alone;
A throb, when the soul is entered
By a light that is lit above,
Where the God of Nature has centered
The Beauty of Love.—
The world is wide,—these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

A look that is telling a tale,
Which looks alone dare tell,—
When a cheek is no longer pale,
That has caught the glance, as it fell;
A touch, which seems to unlock
Treasures unknown as yet,
And the bitter-sweet first shock,
One can never forget;
The world is wide,—these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

A sense of an earnest Will
To help the lowly-living,—
And a terrible heart-thrill,
If you have no power of giving:

An arm of aid to the weak,
A friendly hand to the friendless,
Kind words, so short to speak,
But whose echo is endless:
The world is wide,—these things are small,
They may be nothing, but they are All.

The moment we think we have learnt
The lore of the all-wise One,
By which we could stand unburnt,
On the ridge of the seething sun:
The moment we grasp at the clue,
Long-lost and strangely riven,
Which guides our soul to the True,
And the Poet to Heaven.
The world is wide,—these things are small,—
If they be nothing, what is there at all?

Half-Truth

The words that trembled on your lips
Were uttered not—I know it well;
The tears that would your eyes eclipse
Were checked and smothered, e'er they fell:
The looks and smiles I gained from you
Were little more than others won,
And yet you are not wholly true,
Nor wholly just what you have done.

You know, at least you might have known,
That every little grace you gave,—
Your voice's somewhat lowered tone,—
Your hand's faint shake or parting wave,—
Your every sympathetic look
At words that chanced your soul to touch
While reading from some favourite book,
Were much to me—alas, how much!

You might have seen—perhaps you saw—
How all of these were steps of hope

On which I rose, in joy and awe,
Up to my passion's lofty scope:
How after each, a firmer tread
I planted on the slippery ground,
And higher raised my venturous head,
And ever new assurance found.

May be, without a further thought,
It only pleased you thus to please,
And thus to kindly feelings wrought
You measured not the sweet degrees;
Yet, though you hardly understood
Where I was following at your call,
You might—I dare to say you should—
Have thought how far I had to fall.

And thus when fallen, faint, and bruised,
I see another's glad success,
I may have wrongfully accused
Your heart of vulgar fickleness:
But even now, in calm review
Of all I lost and all I won,
I cannot deem you wholly true,
Nor wholly just what you have done.

(1840.)

Shadows

They seemed to those who saw them meet
The casual friends of every day,
Her smile was undisturbed and sweet,
His courtesy was free and gay.

But yet if one the other's name
In some unguarded moment heard,
The heart, you thought so calm and tame,
Would struggle like a captured bird:

And letters of mere formal phrase
Were blistered with repeated tears,—
And this was not the work of days,
But had gone on for years and years!

Alas! that Love was not too strong
For maiden shame and manly pride!
Alas! that they delayed so long
The goal of mutual bliss beside.

Yet what no chance could then reveal,
And neither would be first to own,
Let fate and courage now conceal,
When truth could bring remorse alone.

Mrs. Denison [1]

'Tis right for her to sleep between
Some of those old Cathedral-walls,
And right too that her grave is green
With all the dew and rain that falls.

'Tis well the organ's solemn sighs
Should soar and sink around her rest,
And almost in her ear should rise
The prayers of those she loved the best.

'Tis also well this air is stirred
By Nature's voices loud and low,
By thunder and the chirping bird,
And grasses whispering as they grow.

For all her spirit's earthly course
Was as a lesson and a sign
How to o'errule the hard divorce
That parts things natural and divine.

Undaunted by the clouds of fear,
Undazzled by a happy day,
She made a Heaven about her here,
And took, how much! with her away.

[1] Mrs. Denison was the first wife of the Bishop of Salisbury, and is buried in a grassy space enclosed by the cloisters of that cathedral.

The Brownie

A gentle household Spirit, unchallenged and unpaid,
Attended with his service a lonely servant-maid.

She seemed a weary woman, who had found life unkind,
Whose youth had left her early and little left behind.

Most desolate and dreary her days went on until
Arose this unseen stranger her labours to fulfil.

But now she walked at leisure, secure of blame she slept,
The meal was always ready, the room was always swept.

And by the cheerful firelight, the winter evenings long,
He gave her words of kindness and snatches of sweet song;—

With useful housewife secret and tales of faeries fair,
From times when gaunt magicians and dwarfs and giants were;—

Thus, habit closing round her, by slow degrees she nurst
A sense of trust and pleasure, where she had feared at first.

When strange desire came on her, and shook her like a storm,
To see this faithful being distinct in outward form.

He was so pure a nature, of so benign a will,
It could be nothing fearful, it could be nothing ill.

At first with grave denial her prayer he laid aside,
Then warning and entreaty, but all in vain, he tried.

The wish upgrew to passion,—she urged him more and more,—
Until, as one outwearied, but still lamenting sore,

He promised in her chamber he would attend her call,
When from the small high window the full-moon light should fall.

Most proud and glad that evening she entered to behold
How there her phantom Lover his presence would unfold;

When, lo! in bloody pallor lay, on the moonlit floor,
The Babe she bore and murdered some thirteen years before.

ALEXANDER SMITH

[Born at Kilmarnock, December 31, 1829. For many years a pattern-designer and afterwards a journalist, he obtained the secretaryship to Edinburgh University at the age of twenty-five, and held the post until his death on November 20, 1866. His published books of poems were *A Life Drama and other Poems*, 1852; *Sonnets on the War* (in conjunction with Sidney Dobell), 1855; *City Poems*, 1857; *Edwin of Deira*, 1861. He also wrote and published prose, his book of essays, *Dreamthorp*, being the work by which he is most widely known.]

Into a not very voluminous body of work, Alexander Smith managed to pack almost every known poetic vice and some that must surely have waited for him to discover. If extremes of badness alone could exclude a poet from consideration, Smith would have found no place in a collection such as this; he would, indeed, not have been even a name. His work is wild with an almost constant confusion of hysteria with passion; every story he tells, and narrative was his favourite medium, is destroyed by an entirely erratic psychologic sense; he drops easily from the most hectic manner to such flatness as—

> "My heart is in the grave with her,
> The family went abroad;"

his imagery can achieve a falsity which is almost revolting, as in—

> "As holds the wretched west the sunset's corpse;"

and he writes habitually as though poetry should be a dissipation instead of a discipline. And yet, in spite of such cardinal and withering defects, which cannot but be allowed by the least susceptible judgment, it is impossible to leave a reading of Smith's collected poems without a friendly feeling for the poet, and a willing concession that, however sadly they are obscured, here are qualities of an admirable kind: qualities indeed that are as rare as poetry itself.

His defects are unfortunately of such a kind as to make it extremely difficult to give him any very gallant show by quotation, since he never flies clear of his bad habits for more than a few lines

at a time, never even for one complete short poem; and they make it still more difficult to hope that his due reward will ever come from any considerable public reading his work in its entirety, since they must bring nine readers out of ten to desperation long before the end is reached. Thus inexorably does the fastidious art of poetry enforce its demand for nothing less than perfect service. Many poets with smaller natural endowment than Alexander Smith are and will be more carefully remembered, and to attempt to arrest judgment in these matters is futile. Nevertheless, it is pleasant to think a little of those finer strains in this strange energy, and to hope that in recording and illustrating them something may be done to preserve from too deep a neglect a gift that more happily organized would certainly have won durable and high honour.

Behind the undisciplined welter which earned for Smith and one or two of his contemporaries the name of "spasmodics," is a genuine poetic emotion, which for all its failure to find any sustained adequate expression, breaks into continual notes of energetic and sometimes impressive beauty. The faults, heavy as they are, are always the faults of a fervent, delighted nature, never of dull formality. Smith's poetry is under-educated, which at worst is better than being over-educated. And in addition to these recurrent glimpses of an ardent nature truly making some gesture for itself, we find scattered through his work traces of a vivacious descriptive faculty, touched by a companionably racy humour. It is, perhaps, in such shrewd and deft pictures as those of the Abbot and the Crown Inn, here given: in such lines of rough poetic sense as—

> "You shine through each disguise;
> You are a masker in a mask of glass. . . "

and such quick-wittedness as—

> "As gaily dight,
> As goldfinch swinging on a thistle top. . ."

that his perception is most original and least clouded by poetic "smother." Finally, he must be allowed something at least of the story-teller's art. He never carries a tale through without dulling prolixity, and, as has been said, his grasp of motive is always uncertain; but there are times, especially in the opening stages of *Edwin of Deira*, and in the single incident of the assassin-beggar later in the same poem, where he does absorb the attention in the

movement of his narrative. I may say here, in opposition to the opinion of an eminent critic, that *Edwin of Deira* "might, without much loss, have remained unwritten," that this poem seems to me easily to be Smith's nearest approach to sustained achievement. If in mere interest as a story the last two books had maintained the standard of the first two, the whole would have remained of a not very exalted kind, but in that kind quite notably good. The truth seems to be that Smith was chiefly ambitious to create poetry directly out of his emotional experience, to resolve his own soul into music, and that whenever he attempted to do this he was prostrated by a poetic excitement instead of being braced by poetic intensity, and that he was most successful when he was not too poignantly interested in some incident or image that left the balance of his own personality undisturbed.

To say that his poetry was under-educated is not to imply that he was unacquainted with the work of his fellow poets. On the contrary his knowledge of poetry has sometimes been held to show itself too emphatically in his own work. It is, rather, his art that is under-educated; it is too argumentative, too anxiously active. His expression is under-deliberated and under-wrought. As for the direct influence of other men on his work, little need be said of such occasional things as his—

> "And in your heart a linnet sits and sings,"

which recalls so closely Crashaw's—

> "Love's nightingales shall sit and sing."

These parallels are common enough in every poet's work. But it is interesting to note that while Smith may confidently enough be said to have caught more than an accent at times from Tennyson, as he very honourably might do, it is not easy to point to particular passages that resemble the great Victorian poet, and yet it is very easy to find in Smith a strange likeness to another much later poet who also nourished his own rare if unfulfilled gift from Tennyson's riches, very probably without ever having read a line of Smith. Such lines as—

> "By hermit streams, by pale sea-setting stars
> And by the roaring of the storm-tost pines;
> And I have sought for thee upon the hills
> In dim sweet dreams, on the complacent sea,
> When breathless midnight . . ."

and—

"He clasped his withered hands
Fondly upon her head, and bent it back,
As one might bend a downward-looking flower . . ."

and—

"Are farewells said in heaven? and has each bright
And young divinity a sunset hour?"

might in many ears miss anything characteristic of Tennyson, but they would hardly be challenged anywhere if they were set down as coming from Stephen Phillips. So obscurely do great influences assert themselves.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

FROM "A LIFE DRAMA" (SCENE VII)

I 'll show you one who might have been an abbot
In the old time; a large and portly man,
With merry eyes, and crown that shines like glass.
No thin-smiled April he, bedript with tears,
But appled-Autumn, golden-cheeked and tan;
A jest in his mouth feels sweet as crusted wine.
As if all eager for a merry thought,
The pits of laughter dimple in his cheeks.
His speech is flavourous, evermore he talks
In a warm, brown, autumnal sort of style.
A worthy man, Sir! who shall stand at compt
With conscience white, save some few stains of wine.

SONNET

Like clouds or streams we wandered on at will,
Three glorious days, till, near our journey's end,
As down the moorland road we straight did wend,
To Wordsworth's "Inversneyd," talking to kill
The cold and cheerless drizzle in the air,
'Bove me I saw, at pointing of my friend,
An old Fort like a ghost upon the hill,

Stare in blank misery through the blinding rain,
So human-like it seemed in its despair—
So stunned with grief—long gazed at it we twain.
Weary and damp we reached our poor abode,
I, warmly seated in the chimney-nook,
Still saw that old Fort o'er the moorland road
Stare through the rain with strange woe-wildered look.

From "Edwin of Deira" (Book I)

Then at his wish, the haggard Prince was led
To the great hall wherein was set the feast;
And at his step, from out the smoky glare
And gloom of guttering torches, weeping pitch,
A hundred bearded faces were upraised,
Flaming with mead: and from their masters' stools
Great dogs upstarting snarled; and from the dais,
The King, while wonder raised the eyebrow, asked
What man he was? what business brought him there?

When Edwin thus, the target of all eyes:

"One who has brothered with the ghostly bats,
That skim the twilight on their leathern wings,
And with the rooks that caw in airy towns;
One intimate with misery: who has known
The fiend that in the hind's pinched entrail sits
Devising treason, and the death of kings— . . ."

From "Horton"

Can pensive Spring, a snowdrop in his hand,
A solitary lark above his head,
Laugh like the jovial sinner in his cups?
I vote for Winter! Why, you know the "Crown,"
The rows of pewter winking in the light,
The mighty egg-flip at the sanded bar,
The nine-pins, skittles, silent dominoes,

The bellied landlord with his purple head,
Like a red cabbage on December morn
Crusted with snow. His buxom daughter, Bess—
A dahlia, not a rosebud—she who bears
The foaming porter to the guests, and laughs
The loudest at their wit. Can any Summer
Build you a nest like that?

From "Squire Maurice"

Inland I wander slow,
Mute with the power the earth and heaven wield:
A black spot sails across the golden field,
And through the air a crow.
Before me wavers spring's first butterfly;
From out the sunny noon there starts the cuckoo's cry;
The daisied meads are musical with lambs;
Some play, some feed, some, white as snow-flakes, lie
In the deep sunshine, by their silent dams.
The road grows wide and level to the feet;
The wandering woodbine through the hedge is drawn
Unblown its streaky bugles dim and sweet;
Knee-deep in fern stand startled doe and fawn,
And lo! there gleams upon a spacious lawn
An Earl's marine retreat.
A little footpath quivers up the height,
And what a vision for a townsman's sight!
A village, peeping from its orchard bloom,
With lowly roofs of thatch, blue threads of smoke,
O'erlooking all, a parsonage of white.
I hear the smithy's hammer, stroke on stroke,
A steed is at the door; the rustics talk,
Proud of the notice of the gaitered groom;
A shallow river breaks o'er shallow falls.
Beside the ancient sluice that turns the mill
The lusty miller bawls;
The parson listens in his garden-walk,
The red-cloaked woman pauses on the hill,
This is a place, you say, exempt from ill,
A paradise, where, all the loitering day,

Enamoured pigeons coo upon the roof,
Where children ever play.—
Alas! Time's webs are rotten, warp and woof;
Rotten his cloth of gold, his coarsest wear:
Here, black-eyed Richard ruins red-cheeked Moll,
Indifferent as a lord to her despair.
The broken barrow hates the prosperous dray;
And, for a padded pew in which to pray,
The grocer sells his soul.

JEAN INGELOW

[Born 1820 at Boston, Lincolnshire, of an English father and a Scottish mother. She spent her youth in the Fen country which she so often describes in her verses, and soon after 1860 fixed her home in London, where she died in 1897. In 1850 she published a volume of small importance; this was followed in 1863 by the *Poems* which made her reputation. This book ran through many editions, and four years later was issued in a volume illustrated by many of the best artists, which had so much success that twelve years later the 23rd edition was announced, while in America it is said that over 200,000 copies of her works were sold. After 1864 she wrote many novels and was particularly happy in her various stories for children.]

When Jean Ingelow published her first book, *A Rhyming Chronicle*, in 1849 or 1850, a relative of hers sent it to Tennyson and he acknowledged it saying: "Your cousin must be worth knowing; there are some very charming things in her book." Then followed some rather sharp criticisms, and it may have been in part owing to them that the young lady hesitated for a dozen years before issuing another volume. That however, the *Poems* of 1863, had great and immediate success, for although it failed to satisfy readers in search of profound thought or exceptional technique, it appealed to that wide public which seeks for common themes intelligibly treated, tender feeling, and melodious verse. Nobody, not even the schoolgirls who adored her, ever claimed for Miss Ingelow a place among the great poets, but thousands of quiet folk enjoyed her ballads, her narratives, and her songs, because they expressed in a charming way the thoughts of which they themselves had been vaguely conscious and described in clear language situations and characters that they could understand and appreciate. The poems which we have selected, and which will be well known to the older generation of readers, will explain and justify this success, and those who read them, whether for the first time or as pieces with which they were once familiar, will admit that a poem so true and so tragic as *The High Tide*, or such a song as *When Sparrows Build*, are worth preserving and that their author ought not to be forgotten.

Editor.

The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire

The old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
"Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth he.
"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston Bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe 'The Brides of Enderby'!"

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was nought of strange, beside
The flights of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies,
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
"For the dews will soone be falling;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed."

If it be long, ay, long ago,
When I beginne to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong;
And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee)
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
And not a shadow mote be seene,
Save where full five good miles away
The steeple tower'd from out the greene;
And lo! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the country-side
That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came down that kyndly message free,
The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
And where the lordly steeple shows;
They sayde, "And why should this thing be!
What danger lowers by land or sea?
They ring the tune of Enderby!

"For evil news from Mablethorpe,
Of pyrate galleys warping down;
For shippes ashore beyonde the scorpe,
They have not spared to wake the towne:
But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring 'The Brides of Enderby'?"

I looked without, and lo! my sonne
  Came riding downe with might and main:
He raised a shout as he drew on,
  Till all the welkin rang again,
"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my son's wife, Elizabeth.)

"The old sea wall (he cried) is downe,
  The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
  Go sailing uppe the market-place."
He shook as one that looks on death:
"God save you, mother!" straight he saith;
"Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds away,
  With her two bairns I marked her long;
And ere yon bells beganne to play
  Afar I heard her milking song."
He looked across the grassy lea,
To right, to left, "Ho Enderby!"
They rang "The Brides of Enderby"!

With that he cried and beat his breast;
  For lo! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
  And uppe the Lindis raging sped.
It swept with thunderous noises loud;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed
  Shook all her trembling bankes amaine;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
  Flung up her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

So far, so fast the eygre drave,
The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow seething wave
Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet:
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sat that night,
The noise of bells went sweeping by;
I marked the lofty beacon light
Stream from the church tower, red and high—
A lurid mark and dread to see;
And awesome bells they were to mee,
That in the dark rang "Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide
From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed;
And I—my sonne was at my side,
And yet the ruddy beacon glowed;
And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
"O come in life, or come in death!
O lost! my love, Elizabeth."

And didst thou visit him no more?
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare;
The waters laid thee at his doore,
Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!
To manye more than myne and mee:
But each will mourn his own (she saith),
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more,
By the reedy Lindis shore,
"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling
Ere the early dews be falling;
I shall never hear her song,
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
Goeth, floweth;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.
I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
Shiver, quiver;
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing in its falling
To the sandy lonesome shore;
I shall never hear her calling,
"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, Come uppe Lightfoot;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow;
Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift your head;
Come uppe Jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty to the milking shed."

When Sparrows Build

When sparrows build, and the leaves break forth,
My old sorrow wakes and cries,
For I know there is dawn in the far, far north,
And a scarlet sun doth rise;
Like a scarlet fleece the snow-field spreads,
And the icy founts run free,
And the bergs begin to bow their heads,
And plunge, and sail in the sea.

O my lost love, and my own, own love,
And my love that loved me so!
Is there never a chink in the world above
Where they listen for words from below?
Nay, I spoke once, and I grieved thee sore,
I remember all that I said,
And now thou wilt hear me no more—no more
Till the sea gives up her dead.

Thou didst set thy foot on the ship, and sail
To the ice-fields and the snow;
Thou wert sad, for thy love did nought avail,
And the end I could not know;
How could I tell I should love thee to-day,
Whom that day I held not dear?
How could I know I should love thee away
When I did not love thee anear?

We shall walk no more through the sodden plain
With the faded bents o'erspread,
We shall stand no more by the seething main
While the dark wrack drives o'erhead;
We shall part no more in the wind and the rain,
Where thy last farewell was said;
But perhaps I shall meet thee and know thee again
When the sea gives up her dead.

COVENTRY PATMORE

[ELDEST son of Peter George Patmore; born July 23, 1823, at Woodford in Essex; educated at home by his father, who "did all he could to develope in him an ardour for poetry." He went to Paris and began to write verses in 1839. He published *Poems*, 1844. From 1846 to 1865 he was an assistant in the Library of the British Museum. *Tamerton Church-Tower*, 1853; *The Betrothal*, 1854; *The Espousals*, 1856; *Faithful for Ever*, 1860; *The Victories of Love.* 1863; were instalments of a single narrative-poem, *The Angel in the House.* Patmore was married in 1847, again in 1865, and a third time in 1881. He settled at Heron's Ghyll, in Sussex, and printed his *Odes* in 1868. These, much enlarged, form *The Unknown Eros*, of 1877. His prose essays were published as *Principle in Art*, 1889; *Religio Poetae*, 1893; and *The Rod, the Root, and the Flower*, 1895. He lived in Hastings from 1875 to 1891, when he removed to Lymington, where he died on November 26, 1896.]

When, in 1886, Patmore rightly judged that he had closed his task as a poet, he solemnly recorded that he had

"traversed the ground and reached the end which, in my youth, I saw before me. I have written little, but it is all my best; I have never spoken when I had nothing to say, nor spared time or labour to make my words true. I have respected posterity, and should there be a posterity which cares for letters, I dare to hope that it will respect me."

When he wrote these words he had been a practising poet for forty-seven years, but with long intervals of silence and retirement. It was part of Coventry Patmore's intellectual creed to regard the writing of verse as by no means the exclusive or perhaps even main occupation of a poet. Hence he was content to spend months and even years in meditation, during which he filled the cells of his nature with the material for poetry. Between the ages of thirty and forty he composed steadily, though even then not abundantly; while, during all the other years of his life, his actual writing was performed at long intervals, in feverish spurts. This mode of production is worthy of notice in Patmore's case, because of the extraordinary concentration of his thought and will on the vocation of the poet. The intention to write was never out of his mind, and

yet he had the power of will to refuse himself the satisfaction of writing except on those rare occasions when he felt capable of doing his best.

From childhood to the grave Coventry Patmore was supported and impelled by the conviction that he had a certain mission to perform. His sense of how this was to be carried out became modified, but of the mission itself he never had the slightest doubt. He believed himself to be called upon to celebrate Nuptial Love, "the more serious importance of which had been singularly missed by most poets of all countries," as he told Aubrey de Vere in 1850. As time went on, this theme became rarified and spiritualized in his mind; it took more and more a sacramental character. What had begun with the simple amativeness of *Tamerton Church-Tower* closed in the Catholic transcendentalism of the *Eros and Psyche* odes. "At nine years old I was Love's willing Page," he said in his youth, and in his final maturity he declared that "Love makes life to be a fount perpetual of virginity." The point of view changed, the essential conviction was the same.

It is plain that at the opening of his career Patmore conceived that to carry out his scheme with any measure of success it would be necessary to adopt an objective treatment. The mere subjective method, the lyrical cry of the enamoured youth in person, would not be suitable, because so obvious in expression and so easily misconstrued. The crude and flat romances of 1844, *Lilian* and *Sir Hubert*, which he so carefully suppressed; the less garrulous but highly sentimental *The River* and *The Woodman's Daughter*, which he laboriously re-wrote and condensed; have the value of showing us that from his boyhood, Patmore determined to make verse-narrative the vehicle of his message to mankind. There could really be only one story of fortunate nuptial love, and when he finally adopted a form of it, it turned out, rather exasperatingly, to resemble the *scenario* of some novel by Anthony Trollope or Miss Charlotte Yonge. This quality, the trivial realism of the narrative in *The Angel of the House*, attracted a multitude of readers and at the same time obscured the splendour of the essential part of the poem, so that the very popularity of Patmore's great undertaking delayed and falsified his ultimate success. That success consisted, not in the mild adventures of Honoria and her spouse, but in the magnificence of the philosophical episodes, in which the psychology of love is illustrated in language of great originality and with turns of the most felicitous fancy.

The link between the finished, or at least suspended, *Angel in the House* and the transcendental *Odes* which closed Patmore's poetical career, is to be found in *Amelia*, in which something of the earlier narrative manner is retained, but where utterance of studied simplicity is abruptly abandoned in favour of a brocaded splendour of language. Instead of the light and fluent octosyllabics of *The Angel in the House* Patmore now adopted, and continued to the end to use, a sort of *canzone* or false Pindaric, the theory of which he defended with ardour, but of which there is little more to be said than that it justifies itself by enshrining much of the noblest of his own poetry. *Amelia* is a variant of the universal Patmore theme, the superficial instinct of human desire being depicted as mirroring the profound passion of heavenly love; the poem is distinguished from its predecessors by a greater audacity of expression, illustrated by an extreme vividness of colouring; and from its long series of successors by the fact that it preserves an objective attitude, which Patmore thereafter almost completely abandoned.

We are now at liberty to turn to the product of Patmore's later years, to *The Unknown Eros* and the various fragments which are dependent on that group of poems. This body of verse consists of about fifty odes of various length, all in the Pindaric form which has been mentioned above. There is reason to suppose that these poems should be regarded as fragments of a great work which Patmore began to design after his retirement from official life and settlement at Heron's Ghyll. This followed upon his admission into the Roman Catholic Church and his visit to Rome in 1864. It is believed that he intended to write a sort of spiritual autobiography, in the form of a celebration of the beauty of service to the Blessed Virgin. He did not, however, speak out very plainly about his intention, and we have to deal with the numbers of *The Unknown Eros* as we find them. What, then, we find is a series of lyrics, written in what he called "catalectic" metre, very different in subject, but similar in their earnest and uplifted emotion, in their mystical symbolism, and in their total independence of all contemporary influences. In *The Angel in the House* an unconscious emulation with Tennyson had been apparent; the odes faintly recall Milton and Cowley, but contain scarcely an echo of any more recent voice.

The contrast between the new rapture and the apparent levity of the old narrative manner was so great as to blind the earliest readers of the odes to their quality. Patmore privately printed

an instalment of nine of these in 1868 and distributed them among his friends, not one of whom seems to have perceived their merit. It is true that his selection was from among the most abstruse and least attractive of the poems, but it included so amusing a fling at science as *The Two Deserts* and so splendid an example of Patmore's highest lyrical achievement as (what has since been known as) *Deliciae Sapientiae de Amore*. No one, at all events, was pleased or even interested, and the poet, excessively chagrined, rended and burned the remainder of the 1868 edition. He went on writing, however, and by the time when, in 1877, he published *The Unknown Eros*, the eyes of a new generation had been opened to the majesty of his vision and the penetration of his thought.

The odes of *The Unknown Eros* are now introduced by a "Proem" which gives a somewhat inexact impression of what is to follow. It insists to excess on the political character of the work, which is only part of the revelation in it of Patmore's private convictions. He took a very dark view of the social and political condition of England fifty years ago, and was inclined to look upon himself as the only inspired prophet of her melancholy future:

> "Mid the loud concert harsh
> Of this fog-folded marsh,
> To me, else dumb,
> Uranian Clearness, come!"

he sang with tragic fatalism. But England contrived to escape the horrors of his prognostication, and the political portions of *The Unknown Eros* are now not impressive. They are, fortunately, not numerous; and the reader turns from them to the odes in which the poet reveals his own experience, often, as in *St. Valentine's Day*, with a Wordsworthian felicity, and amid a profusion of beautiful landscape touches. Even more charming are the odes devoted to sentiments of remorse, of recollection or of poignant *desiderium*, the hopeless longing for a vanished face. In these categories *The Azalea*, *The Toys*, and *Departure* rank among the finest examples remaining to us of pure Victorian poetry.

But some parts of *The Unknown Eros*, and especially of the Second Book, are much more abstruse. In these sacramental odes, Patmore is often metaphysical, and sometimes dark with excess of ingenuity. His mystical Catholic poetry is inspired by a study of St. Thomas Aquinas among the ancients and of St. John of the Cross among the moderns. As he pursued his lonely meditations,

his odes became more and more exclusively occupied with the religious symbolism of sex, culminating in *The Child's Purchase* and in *De Natura Deorum*. Perhaps in the latest of all his poems—in *The Three Witnesses* (originally called *Scire Teipsum*), written in 1880—Patmore carries his mystical ecstasy to its most transcendental height, where few can follow him. It is strange to contrast the almost puerile simplicity of his early narrative manner with the harsh and incisive arrogance of his latest lyrics, yet there is a unity running through the whole of Patmore's work which is that of a highly original and passionate writer to whom scarcely anything was denied except pertinacity in the art of construction.

EDMUND GOSSE.

EROS

Bright thro' the valley gallops the brooklet;
Over the welkin travels the cloud;
Touch'd by the zephyr, dances the harebell;
Cuckoo sits somewhere, singing so loud;
Two little children, seeing and hearing,
Hand in hand wander, shout, laugh, and sing:
Lo, in their bosoms, wild with the marvel,
Love, like the crocus, is come ere the Spring.
Young men and women, noble and tender,
Yearn for each other, faith truly plight,
Promise to cherish, comfort and honour;
Vow that makes duty one with delight.
Oh, but the glory, found in no story,
Radiance of Eden unquench'd by the Fall;
Few may remember, none may reveal it,
This the first first-love, the first love of all!

NIGHT AND SLEEP

I

How strange at night to wake
And watch, while others sleep,
Till sight and hearing ache
For objects that may keep

The awful inner sense
  Unroused, lest it should mark
The life that haunts the emptiness
  And horror of the dark!

II

How strange the distant bay
  Of dogs; how wild the note
Of cocks that scream for day,
  In homesteads far remote;
How strange and wild to hear
  The old and crumbling tower,
Amidst the darkness, suddenly
  Take tongue and speak the hour!

III

Albeit the love-sick brain
  Affects the dreary moon,
Ill things alone refrain
  From life's nocturnal swoon:
Men melancholy mad,
  Beasts ravenous and sly,
The robber and the murderer,
  Remorse, with lidless eye.

IV

The nightingale is gay,
  For she can vanquish night;
Dreaming, she sings of day,
  Notes that make darkness bright;
But when the refluent gloom
  Saddens the gaps of song,
Men charge on her the dolefulness,
  And call her crazed with wrong.

V

If dreams or panic dread
  Reveal the gloom of gloom,
Kiss thou the pillow'd head
  By thine, and soft resume

The confident embrace;
And so each other keep
In the sure league of amity
And the safe lap of sleep.

FROM "TAMERTON CHURCH-TOWER" (IV. 7 and 8)

I mounted, now, my patient nag,
And scaled the easy steep;
And soon beheld the quiet flag
On Lanson's solemn Keep.
And now, whenas the waking lights
Bespake the valley'd Town,
A child o'ertook me, on the heights,
In cap and russet-gown.
It was an alms-taught scholar trim,
Who, on her happy way,
Sang to herself the morrow's hymn;
For this was Saturday.
"Saint Stephen, stoned, nor grieved nor groan'd:
'Twas all for his good gain;
For Christ him blest, till he confess'd
A sweet content in pain.
"Then Christ His cross is no way loss,
But even a present boon:
Of His dear blood fair shines a flood
On heaven's eternal noon."
My sight, once more, was dim for her
Who slept beneath the sea,
As on I sped, without the spur,
By homestead, heath, and lea.
O'erhead the perfect moon kept pace,
In meek and brilliant power,
And lit, ere long, the eastern face
Of Tamerton Church-tower.

[From *The Angel in the House.*]

The Poet's Confidence

The richest realm of all the earth
  Is counted still a heathen land:
Lo, I, like Joshua, now go forth
  To give it into Israel's hand.
I will not hearken blame or praise;
  For so should I dishonour do
To that sweet Power by which these Lays
  Alone are lovely, good, and true;
Nor credence to the world's cries give,
  Which ever preach and still prevent
Pure passion's high prerogative
  To make, not follow, precedent.

Love at Large

Whene'er I come where ladies are,
  How sad soever I was before,
Though like a ship frost-bound and far
  Withheld in ice from the ocean's roar,
Third-winter'd in that dreadful dock,
  With stiffen'd cordage, sails decay'd,
And crew that care for calm and shock
  Alike, too dull to be dismay'd,
Yet, if I come where ladies are,
  How sad soever I was before,
Then is my sadness banish'd far,
  And I am like that ship no more;
Or like that ship if the ice-field splits,
  Burst by the sudden polar Spring,
And all thank God with their warming wits,
  And kiss each other and dance and sing,
And hoist fresh sails, that make the breeze
  Blow them along the liquid sea,
Out of the North, where life did freeze,
  Into the haven where they would be.

The Lover

He meets, by heavenly chance express,
The destined maid; some hidden hand
Unveils to him that loveliness
Which others cannot understand.
His merits in her presence grow,
To match the promise in her eyes,
And round her happy footsteps blow
The authentic airs of Paradise.
For joy of her he cannot sleep;
Her beauty haunts him all the night;
It melts his heart, it makes him weep
For wonder, worship, and delight.
O, paradox of love, he longs,
Most humble when he most aspires,
To suffer scorn and cruel wrongs
From her he honours and desires.
Her graces make him rich, and ask
No guerdon; this imperial style
Affronts him; he disdains to bask,
The pensioner of her priceless smile.
He prays for some hard thing to do,
Some work of fame and labour immense,
To stretch the languid bulk and thew
Of love's fresh-born magnipotence.
No smallest boon were bought too dear,
Though barter'd for his love-sick life;
Yet trusts he, with undaunted cheer,
To vanquish heaven, and call her Wife.
He notes how queens of sweetness still
Neglect their crowns, and stoop to mate;
How, self-consign'd with lavish will,
They ask but love proportionate;
How swift pursuit by small degrees,
Love's tactic, works like miracle;
How valour, clothed in courtesies,
Brings down the haughtiest citadel;

And therefore, though he merits not
To kiss the braid upon her skirt,
His hope, discouraged ne'er a jot,
Out-soars all possible desert.

The Revelation

An idle poet, here and there,
Looks round him; but, for all the rest,
The world, unfathomably fair,
Is duller than a witling's jest.
Love wakes men, once a lifetime each;
They lift their heavy lids, and look;
And, lo, what one sweet page can teach,
They read with joy, then shut the book.
And some give thanks, and some blaspheme,
And most forget; but, either way,
That and the Child's unheeded dream
Is all the light of all their day.

The Amaranth

Feasts satiate; stars distress with height;
Friendship means well, but misses reach,
And wearies in its best delight
Vex'd with the vanities of speech;
Too long regarded, roses even
Afflict the mind with fond unrest;
And to converse direct with Heaven
Is oft a labour in the breast;
Whate'er the up-looking soul admires,
Whate'er the senses' banquet be,
Fatigues at last with vain desires,
Or sickens by satiety;
But truly my delight was more
In her to whom I'm bound for aye
Yesterday than the day before,
And more to-day than yesterday.

Love's Perversity

How strange a thing a lover seems
To animals that do not love!
Lo, where he walks and talks in dreams,
And flouts us with his Lady's glove;
How foreign in the garb he wears;
And how his great devotion mocks
Our poor propriety, and scares
The undevout with paradox!
His soul, through scorn of worldly care,
And great extremes of sweet and gall,
And musing much on all that 's fair,
Grows witty and fantastical;
He sobs his joy and sings his grief,
And evermore finds such delight
In simply picturing his relief
That 'plaining seems to cure his plight;
He makes his sorrow, when there 's none;
His fancy blows both cold and hot;
Next to the wish that she 'll be won,
His first hope is that she may not;
He sues, yet deprecates consent;
Would she be captured she must fly;
She looks too happy and content,
For whose last pleasure he would die.
Oh, cruelty, she cannot care
For one to whom she 's always kind!
He says he 's nought, but, oh, despair,
If he 's not Jove to her fond mind!
He 's jealous if she pets a dove,
She must be his with all her soul;
Yet 'tis a postulate in love
That part is greater than the whole;
And all his apprehension's stress,
When he 's with her, regards her hair,
Her hand, a ribbon of her dress,
As if his life were only there;
Because she 's constant, he will change,
And kindest glances coldly meet,

And, all the time he seems so strange,
His soul is fawning at her feet;
Of smiles and simple heaven grown tired,
He wickedly provokes her tears,
And when she weeps, as he desired,
Falls slain with ecstasies of fears;
He blames her, though she has no fault,
Except the folly to be his;
He worships her, the more to exalt
The profanation of a kiss;
Health 's his disease; he 's never well
But when his paleness shames her rose;
His faith 's a rock-built citadel,
Its sign a flag that each way blows;
His o'erfed fancy frets and fumes;
And Love, in him, is fierce, like Hate,
And ruffles his ambrosial plumes
Against the bars of time and fate.

From "Amelia"

While, therefore, now
Her pensive footstep stirr'd
The darnell'd garden of unheedful death,
She ask'd what Millicent was like, and heard
Of eyes like her's, and honeysuckle breath,
And of a wiser than a woman's brow,
Yet fill'd with only woman's love, and how
An incidental greatness character'd
Her unconsider'd ways.
But all my praise
Amelia thought too slight for Millicent,
And on my lovelier-freighted arm she leant,
For more attent;
And the tea-rose I gave,
To deck her breast, she dropp'd upon the grave.
"And this was her's," said I, decoring with a band
Of mildest pearls Amelia's milder hand.

"Nay I will wear it for *her* sake," she said:
For dear to maidens are their rivals dead.
And so,
She seated on the black yew's tortured root,
I on the carpet of sere shreds below,
And nigh the little mound where lay that other,
I kiss'd her lips three times without dispute,
And, with bold worship suddenly aglow,
I lifted to my lips a sandall'd foot
And kiss'd it three times thrice without dispute.
Upon my head her fingers fell like snow,
Her lamb-like hands about my neck she wreathed.
Her arms like slumber o'er my shoulders crept,
And with her bosom, whence the azalea breathed,
She did my face full favourably smother,
To hide the heaving secret that she wept!
Now would I keep my promise to her Mother;
Now I arose, and raised her to her feet,
My best Amelia, fresh-born from a kiss,
Moth-like, full-blown in birthdew shuddering sweet,
With great, kind eyes, in whose brown shade
Bright Venus and her Baby play'd!
At inmost heart well pleased with one another,
What time the slant sun low
Through the plough'd field does each clod sharply shew,
And softly fills
With shade the dimples of our homeward hills,
With little said,
We left the 'wilder'd garden of the dead,
And gain'd the gorse-lit shoulder of the down
That keeps the north-wind from the nestling town,
And caught, once more, the vision of the wave,
Where, on the horizon's dip,
A many-sailèd ship
Pursued alone her distant purpose grave;
And, by steep steps rock-hewn, to the dim street
I led her sacred feet;
And so the Daughter gave,
Soft, moth-like, sweet,
Showy as damask-rose and shy as musk,
Back to her Mother, anxious in the dusk.

And now "Good night!"
Me shall the phantom months no more affright.
For heaven's gates to open well waits he
Who keeps himself the key.

[From *The Unknown Eros*]

Winter

I, singularly moved
To love the lovely that are not beloved,
Of all the Seasons, most
Love Winter, and to trace
The sense of the Trophonian pallor on her face.
It is not death, but plenitude of peace;
And the dim cloud that does the world enfold
Hath less the characters of dark and cold
Than warmth and light asleep,
And correspondent breathing seems to keep
With the infant harvest, breathing soft below
Its eider coverlet of snow.
Nor is in field or garden anything
But, duly look'd into, contains serene
The substance of things hoped for, in the Spring,
And evidence of Summer not yet seen.
On every chance-mild day
That visits the moist shaw,
The honeysuckle, 'sdaining to be crost
In urgence of sweet life by sleet or frost,
'Voids the time's law
With still increase
Of leaflet new, and little, wandering spray;
Often, in sheltering brakes,
As one from rest disturb'd in the first hour,
Primrose or violet bewilder'd wakes,
And deems 'tis time to flower;
Though not a whisper of her voice he hear,
The buried bulb does know
The signals of the year,
And hails far Summer with his lifted spear.

The gorse-field dark, by sudden, gold caprice,
Turns, here and there, into a Jason's fleece;
Lilies, that soon in Autumn slipp'd their gowns of green,
And vanish'd into earth,
And came again, ere Autumn died, to birth,
Stand full array'd, amidst the wavering shower,
And perfect for the Summer, less the flower;
In nook of pale or crevice of crude bark,
Thou canst not miss,
If close thou spy, to mark
The ghostly chrysalis,
That, if thou touch it, stirs in its dream dark;
And the flush'd Robin, in the evenings hoar,
Does of Love's Day, as if he saw it, sing;
But sweeter yet than dream or song of Summer or Spring
Are Winter's sometime smiles, that seem to well
From infancy ineffable;
Her wandering, languorous gaze,
So unfamiliar, so without amaze,
On the elemental, chill adversity,
The uncomprehended rudeness; and her sigh
And solemn, gathering tear,
And look of exile from some great repose, the sphere
Of ether, moved by ether only, or
By something still more tranquil.

The Azalea

There, where the sun shines first
Against our room,
She train'd the gold Azalea, whose perfume
She, Spring-like, from her breathing grace dispersed.
Last night the delicate crests of saffron bloom,
For this their dainty likeness watch'd and nurst,
Were just at point to burst.
At dawn I dream'd, O God, that she was dead,
And groan'd aloud upon my wretched bed,
And waked, ah, God, and did not waken her,
But lay, with eyes still closed,
Perfectly bless'd in the delicious sphere

By which I knew so well that she was near,
My heart to speechless thankfulness composed.
Till 'gan to stir
A dizzy somewhat in my troubled head—
It *was* the azalea's breath, and she *was* dead!
The warm night had the lingering buds disclosed,
And I had fall'n asleep with to my breast
A chance-found letter press'd
In which she said,
"So, till to-morrow eve, my Own, adieu!
Parting 's well-paid with soon again to meet,
Soon in your arms to feel so small and sweet,
Sweet to myself that am so sweet to you!"

Departure

It was not like your great and gracious ways!
Do you, that have nought other to lament,
Never, my Love, repent
Of how, that July afternoon,
You went,
With sudden, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,
Upon your journey of so many days,
Without a single kiss, or a good-bye?
I knew, indeed, that you were parting soon;
And so we sate, within the low sun's rays,
You whispering to me, for your voice was weak,
Your harrowing praise.
Well, it was well,
To hear you such things speak,
And I could tell
What made your eyes a growing gloom of love,
As a warm South-wind sombres a March grove.
And it was like your great and gracious ways
To turn your talk on daily things, my Dear,
Lifting the luminous, pathetic lash
To let the laughter flash,
Whilst I drew near,
Because you spoke so low that I could scarcely hear.

But all at once to leave me at the last,
More at the wonder than the loss aghast,
With huddled, unintelligible phrase,
And frighten'd eye,
And go your journey of all days
With not one kiss, or a good-bye,
And the only loveless look the look with which you pass'd:
'Twas all unlike your great and gracious ways.

The Toys

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him, and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said:
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,

Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

To the Body

Creation's and Creator's crowning good;
Wall of infinitude;
Foundation of the sky,
In Heaven forecast
And long'd for from eternity,
Though laid the last;
Reverberating dome,
Of music cunningly built home
Against the void and indolent disgrace
Of unresponsive space;
Little, sequester'd pleasure-house
For God and for His Spouse;
Elaborately, yea, past conceiving, fair,
Since, from the graced decorum of the hair,
Ev'n to the tingling, sweet
Soles of the simple, earth-confiding feet,
And from the inmost heart
Outwards unto the thin
Silk curtains of the skin,
Every least part
Astonish'd hears
And sweet replies to some like region of the spheres;
Form'd for a dignity prophets but darkly name,
Lest shameless men cry "Shame!"
So rich with wealth conceal'd
That Heaven and Hell fight chiefly for this field;
Clinging to everything that pleases thee
With indefectible fidelity;
Alas, so true
To all thy friendships that no grace
Thee from thy sin can wholly disembrace;
Which thus 'bides with thee as the Jebusite,
That, maugre all God's promises could do,

The chosen People never conquer'd quite;
Who therefore lived with them,
And that by formal truce and as of right,
In metropolitan Jerusalem.
For which false fealty
Thou needs must, for a season, lie
In the grave's arms, foul and unshriven,
Albeit, in Heaven,
Thy crimson-throbbing Glow
Into its old abode aye pants to go,
And does with envy see
Enoch, Elijah, and the Lady, she
Who left the roses in her body's lieu.
O, if the pleasures I have known in thee
But my poor faith's poor first-fruits be,
What quintessential, keen, ethereal bliss
Then shall be his
Who has thy birth-time's consecrating dew
For death's sweet chrism retain'd,
Quick, tender, virginal, and unprofaned!

EDWARD FITZGERALD

[Born near Woodbridge, Suffolk, March 31, 1809; educated at Bury St. Edmunds School and at Trinity College, Cambridge. Married the daughter of his neighbour Bernard Barton, the Quaker poet. Published in 1851 *Euphranor, a Dialogue on Youth,* in 1852 *Polonius,* and in the following year *Six Dramas of Calderon, freely translated.* His translations from Aeschylus and Sophocles appeared anonymously a good deal later, but in 1859 he published *The Rubâiyât of Omar Khayyâm,* which, neglected at first, gradually secured a firm position, largely through the influence of Rossetti and some other men of letters who were greatly struck by the beauty and melody of the verse. Fitzgerald died in 1883. Several volumes of his letters were afterwards published by Mr. Aldis Wright, and a pleasant picture of him is preserved in Mr. F. H. Groome's *Two Suffolk Friends.*]

Edward Fitzgerald claims to be remembered on two special grounds. He was a man of many warm, even intense friendships, of which the record remains in more than one volume of delightful letters; and he was a translator whose renderings from other languages had in a marked degree many of the qualities of original poetry. He lived from 1809 to 1883, and among his intimate friends he counted many of the foremost men of letters of his time, Alfred and Frederic Tennyson, James Spedding the editor of Bacon, Thomas Carlyle, and W. M. Thackeray being the most prominent names among them. With these he corresponded freely, but he wrote as liberally to many others, such as Bernard Barton the Quaker poet, W. F. Pollock, W. H. Thompson, for many years Master of Trinity, E. B. Cowell the Oriental scholar, Aldis Wright the Shakespearian (who afterwards edited Fitzgerald's works), and, after 1870, the eminent Americans, J. R. Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton. The charm of his letters lies in the frank and natural view which they give of a many-sided life. Fitzgerald was far from being only a literary man. He lived for the most part in a remote part of Suffolk, chiefly in a cottage, though he was a considerable landowner; but during many years he spent most of the summer on board a little pleasure yacht, in which he would sail down to the English Channel, often venturing as far as Cornwall;

and at home he read with avidity, bought books, and collected old pictures, sometimes Venetian and more often English, especially those of the Norwich school. On whatever books he read, he quickly formed an opinion, which he would express with a shrewd incisiveness that one cannot help admiring, however one may disagree. Greatly as he valued Tennyson, he could write (in 1842) "Why reprint The Merman, The Mermaid, and those everlasting Eleanores, Isabels, which always were and are and must be a nuisance?" Three years later, *à propos* of *In Memoriam* (as yet unpublished) he asks his friend W. B. Donne "Don't you think the world wants other notes than elegiac now?" After sharp criticism like this, it is not surprising to find him, thirty years later, seeing little merit in *The Lover's Tale*, *Queen Mary*, and such like; and yet his real opinion comes out in such passages as that in which, contrasting Tennyson with Browning (whom he never liked or appreciated), he declares that "Alfred has stocked the English language with lines which once knowing one cannot forego." Dickens he adored, and at seventy years of age he cries "I bless and rejoice in Dickens more and more," while of his old and intimate friend Thackeray he speaks in varying tones, now praising, and now not fearing to agree with those who thought *Pendennis* dull. Late in life he came to doubt the merits of George Borrow; he agreed with a friend who declared that Miss Brontë was "a great Mistress of the Disagreeable;" and he confessed that he had tried, and failed, to read *The Life and Death of Jason*. All through, his own special favourite among the English poets of what were then more or less recent years was George Crabbe, for whom he confessed to a "monomania" of admiration. It was certainly something of a paradox that he should assign so high a rank to this chronicler of quiet English life; for at the very same time he was zealously translating not only the Spanish dramatist Calderon but the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus and the two greatest of the plays of Sophocles.

Fitzgerald's lack of literary ambition was for many years a matter of common talk among his friends; in point of fact he was nearly fifty before he began the work which has made him famous, and he was over seventy when the two *Oedipus* plays saw the light. It need hardly be said that by the work which made him famous we mean the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, the Astronomer-Poet of Persia—a twelfth-century bard who until Fitzgerald took him in hand had been almost forgotten by scholars, but who is now prob-

ably more widely known in the Western world than any other poet of Asia. Let us not forget that the man who taught Fitzgerald the Persian language and who led him to study Omar was his friend E. B. Cowell, who read with him at home, corresponded with him from India, and as Professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge kept his interest in Eastern literature alive until the end. The difficulties in the way of the translation were very great; there was at that time no printed version of the original poem, and the MSS. were inconsistent, imperfect, and often corrupt. This is the main reason for the curious discrepancies between Fitzgerald's first edition (1859) and those which followed, discrepancies so marked that Mr. Aldis Wright, in his Collected Writings of Fitzgerald, thought it desirable to print the two versions (ed. 1 and ed. 4) *in extenso.*

The passages—Rubáiyát or Quatrains—quoted below are from the definitive edition; to print from an earlier version would have been to do violence to one of Fitzgerald's most positive rules, that a poet's final edition is the best edition. The question whether the English Quartrains fairly represent the original has often been discussed, and Fitzgerald himself never claimed that they were in any way an exact rendering. Writing to Cowell, of the first version in 1858, he spoke of it as "very unliteral;" and Aldis Wright in an editorial note (1889) admits that "Fitzgerald took great liberties with the original in his version of Omar Khayyám." That was his way; anybody can see it in his *Oedipus* and *Agamemnon.* The safeguard to those who, like the present writer, are ignorant of Persian is that Professor Cowell was at hand all the time, and we may be sure that in all essentials he kept the translator fairly to his task. "Many Quartrains are mashed together," wrote Fitzgerald; but the result, say the scholars, is that Omar's doctrine and Omar's language are substantially reproduced. What that doctrine is, the reader will easily gather from the verses themselves. The poet, says his translator, "is a lighter Shadow among the Shades over which Lucretius presides so grimly." He is a philosopher who has convinced himself that Man can unravel many a knot "but not the master knot of Human Fate;" that only one thing is certain, which is Death; that therefore Man's business is to live for the day—"To take the Cash and let the Credit go," to enjoy the beauty of the world and the pleasures of life while they are attainable. A vast amount of discussion has been carried on among scholars as to what Omar meant by the Grape and the Wine-Cup. Did he mean sensual delight, or are these names to disguise the Ideal, the Divine, such

as the Sufi believes in? Fitzgerald himself would hardly answer, and where he hesitated we may be content to remain in doubt. Let us follow Omar's example and enjoy what he offers us—exquisite imagery and a haunting rhythm, to the religious mind "most melancholy," but to every ear "most musical."

Thackeray, starting for America in 1852, wrote most affectionately to his "dearest old friend" begging him to be literary executor should anything untoward happen on his travels. "The great comfort I have in thinking about my dear old boy is the recollection of our youth when we loved each other as I do even when I write Farewell."

And Tennyson, it will be remembered, dedicated *Tiresias* to "Old Fitz" in words just as full of affection; and when the old friend died suddenly and tranquilly before the poem was published, wrote lines of tender benediction,

> "Praying that, when I from hence
> Shall fade with him into the unknown,
> My close of earth's experience
> May prove as peaceful as his own!"

EDITOR.

FROM THE "RUBÁIYÁT"

VII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

VIII

Whether at Naishápûr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

IX

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?
And this first Summer month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

X

Well, let it take them! What have we to do
With Kaikobâd the Great, or Kaikhosrû?
Let Zâl and Rustum bluster as they will,
Or Hâtim call to Supper—heed not you.

XI

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultân is forgot—
And Peace to Mahmûd on his golden Throne!

XII

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

XIII

Some for the Glories of This World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

XIV

Look to the blowing Rose about us—"Lo,
Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow,
At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

XV

And those who husbanded the Golden grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

XVI

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

XVII

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

XVIII

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep:
And Bahrâm, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

XIX

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

XX

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

XXI

Ah, my Belovèd, fill the Cup that clears
To-DAY of past Regret and Future Fears:
To-morrow!—Why, To-morrow I may bè
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

XXII

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

XXIII

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

XXIV

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

* * * * *

XXVII

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

XXVIII

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

XXIX

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

* * * * *

LXVIII

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

LXIX

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

LXX

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Here or There as strikes the Player goes;
And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
He knows about it all—HE knows—HE knows!

LXXI

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
  Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

* * * * * * *

LXXXI

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
  For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

* * * * * * *

XCVI

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should
    close!
  The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

XCVII

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, reveal'd,
  To which the fainting Traveller might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

XCVIII

Would but some wingèd Angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
  And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

XCIX

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
  Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

Z5

WILLIAM JOHNSON (CORY)

[The son of William Johnson, of Torrington, Devon, where he was born, 1823. His mother was a great-niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Educated at Eton (Newcastle Scholar, 1841) and afterwards at King's College, Cambridge, gaining a Fellowship in 1845. Craven Scholar and Chancellor's Prize for an English poem 1843–4. Master at Eton, 1845–72. Inherited an estate at Halsdon, and took the name of Cory, 1872. Lived at Madeira, 1878–82; there married Miss Guille; returned, and lived at Hampstead, where he died in 1892. His small collection of poems, called *Ionica*, was first published 1858.]

William Johnson, who took the name of Cory in his fiftieth year, is still remembered by many friends and pupils for his brilliant qualities as a teacher and for his lovable temperament. He will be remembered by the lovers of literature for three books, the little collection of poems called *Ionica* (1858), the very original *Guide to English History* (1882), and the *Extracts from the Letters and Journals of William Cory*, collected by his friend F. Warre Cornish and published five years after the writer's death. Of this last, the late Richard Garnett said "It would not be easy to find a more charming volume of its class;" and certainly none contains more pleasant self-portraiture or cleverer sketches, at once shrewd and sympathetic, of the boys and young men with whom the writer, as an Eton master, was brought into close relations. The sentences describing young Lord Dalmeny—the Lord Rosebery of a later day—have been often quoted. But while the *Letters* show Johnson as the friendly critic and guide, *Ionica* reveals him as feeling for one or more of his pupils a warmer interest; warmer, indeed, than is commonly either felt or expressed by a modern teacher. Many would regard it as not quite healthy—they feel the same of Shakespeare's Sonnets; but there can be no doubt that under the impulse of this sentiment Johnson wrote poetry of a high order. There are few poems of fifty years ago that so linger in the memory; greater there are in plenty, but not many that still have such a hold upon those who read them in their youth as *A Study of Boyhood*, *Deteriora*, and *Parting*.

We print these, and, to show that Johnson's admiration for boyhood was larger than any personal affection, the fine poem called *A Queen's Visit*, which tells how a word and a smile from the Head of the State were enough to arouse the heroism latent in boy-nature. Another poem, *Amaturus*, is given to show how Johnson could understand and express the perfectly normal feeling of a man for a maid. The verses are charming; they have music, and they have that simple directness of expression which is eschewed by many moderns, anxious to leave the complexity of modern life even more complex than they find it. It may discredit Johnson with some of the votaries of these recondite writers to find him saying, so late as 1883, "Tennyson is the sum and product of the art which begins with Homer . . . He fills my soul, and makes the best part of the forty years of manhood that I have gone through." Certainly Johnson was a Tennysonian, but he was not an imitator of any contemporary. He was steeped in Greek and Latin literature. The lines that are given below ("Guide me with song") are his translation of his own Greek verses; and of the Latin poems printed in his *Lucretilis* the great scholar Munro wrote, "In my humble judgment they are the best and most Horatian Sapphics and Alcaics which I am acquainted with that have been written since Horace ceased to write." [1]

EDITOR.

[1] Cory, *Letters and Journals*, p. 567.

[From *Ionica*]

Mimnermus in Church

You promise heavens free from strife,
  Pure truth, and perfect change of will;
But sweet, sweet is this human life,
  So sweet, I fain would breathe it still;
Your chilly stars I can forgo,
This warm kind world is all I know.

You say there is no substance here,
  One great reality above:
Back from that void I shrink in fear,
  And child-like hide myself in love:
Show me what angels feel. Till then,
I cling, a mere weak man, to men.

You bid me lift my mean desires
  From faltering lips and fitful veins
To sexless souls, ideal quires,
  Unwearied voices, wordless strains:
My mind with fonder welcome owns
One dear dead friend's remembered tones.

Forsooth the present we must give
  To that which cannot pass away;
All beauteous things for which we live
  By laws of time and space decay;
But oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die.

Amaturus

Somewhere beneath the sun,
  These quivering heart-strings prove it,
Somewhere there must be one
  Made for this soul, to move it;

Some one that hides her sweetness
From neighbours whom she slights,
Nor can attain completeness,
Nor give her heart its rights;
Some one whom I could court
With no great change of manner,
Still holding reason's fort,
Though waving fancy's banner;
A lady, not so queenly
As to disdain my hand,
Yet born to smile serenely
Like those that rule the land;
Noble, but not too proud;
With soft hair simply folded,
And bright face crescent-browed,
And throat by Muses moulded;
And eyelids lightly falling
On little glistening seas,
Deep-calm, when gales are brawling,
Though stirred by every breeze:
Swift voice, like flight of dove
Through minster arches floating,
With sudden turns, when love
Gets overnear to doting;
Keen lips, that shape soft sayings
Like crystals of the snow,
With pretty half-betrayings
Of things one may not know;
Fair hand, those touches thrill,
Like golden rod of wonder,
Which Hermes wields at will
Spirit and flesh to sunder;
Light foot, to press the stirrup
In fearlessness and glee,
Or dance, till finches chirrup,
And stars sink to the sea.

Forth, Love, and find this maid,
Wherever she be hidden:
Speak, Love, be not afraid,
But plead as thou art bidden;

And say, that he who taught thee
His yearning want and pain,
Too dearly, dearly bought thee
To part with thee in vain.

A Queen's Visit. (1851)

From vale to vale, from shore to shore,
The lady Gloriana passed,
To view her realms: the south wind bore
Her shallop to Belleisle at last.

A quiet mead, where willows bend
Above the curving wave, which rolls
On slowly crumbling banks, to send
Its hard-won spoils to lazy shoals.

Beneath an oak weird eddies play,
Where fate was writ for Saxon seer;
And yonder park is white with may,
Where shadowy hunters chased the deer.

In rows, half up the chestnut, perch
Stiff-silvered fairies; busy rooks
Caw from the elm; and, rung to church,
Mute anglers drop their caddised hooks.

They troop between the dark-red walls,
When the twin towers give four-fold chimes;
And lo! the breaking groups, where falls
The chequered shade of quivering limes.

They come from field and wharf and street
With dewy hair and veinèd throat,
One floor to tread with reverent feet,—
One hour of rest for ball and boat:

Like swallows gathering for their flight,
When autumn whispers, play no more,
They check the laugh, with fancies bright
Still hovering round the sacred door.

Lo! childhood swelling into seed,
  Lo! manhood bursting from the bud:
Two growths, unlike; yet all agreed
  To trust the movement of the blood.

They toil at games, and play with books:
  They love the winner of the race,
If only he that prospers looks
  On prizes with a simple grace.

The many leave the few to choose;
  They scorn not him who turns aside
To woo alone a milder Muse,
  If shielded by a tranquil pride.

When thought is claimed, when pain is borne,
  Whate'er is done in this sweet isle,
There 's none that may not lift his horn,
  If only lifted with a smile.

So here dwells freedom; nor could she,
  Who ruled in every clime on earth,
Find any spring more fit to be
  The fountain of her festal mirth.

Elsewhere she sought for lore and art,
  But hither came for vernal joy:
Nor was this all: she smote the heart
  And woke the hero in the boy.

A Study of Boyhood

So young, and yet so worn with pain!
No sign of youth upon that stooping head,
Save weak half-curls, like beechen boughs that spread
  With up-turned edge to catch the hurrying rain;

Such little lint-white locks, as wound
About a mother's finger long ago,
When he was blither, not more dear, for woe
  Was then far off, and other sons stood round.

And she has wept since then with him
Watching together, where the ocean gave
To her child's counted breathings wave for wave,
Whilst the heart fluttered, and the eye grew dim.

And when the sun and day-breeze fell,
She kept with him the vigil of despair;
Knit hands for comfort, blended sounds of prayer,
Saw him at dawn face death, and take farewell;

Saw him grow holier through his grief,
The early grief that lined his withering brow,
As one by one her stars were quenched. And now
He that so mourned can play, though life is brief;

Not gay, but gracious; plain of speech,
And freely kindling under beauty's ray,
He dares to speak of what he loves: to-day
He talked of art, and led me on to teach,

And glanced, as poets glance, at pages
Full of bright Florence and warm Umbrian skies;
Not slighting modern greatness, for the wise
Can sort the treasures of the circling ages;

Not echoing the sickly praise,
Which boys repeat, who hear a father's guest
Prate of the London show-rooms; what is best
He firmly lights upon, as birds on sprays;

All honest, and all delicate:
No room for flattery, no smiles that ask
For tender pleasantries, no looks that mask
The genial impulses of love and hate.

Oh bards that call to bank and glen,
Ye bid me go to nature to be healed!
And lo! a purer fount is here revealed:
My lady-nature dwells in heart of men.

Deteriora

One year I lived in high romance,
  A soul ennobled by the grace
Of one whose very frowns enhance
  The regal lustre of the face,
And in the magic of a smile
I dwelt as in Calypso's isle.

One year, a narrow line of blue,
  With clouds both ways awhile held back:
And dull the vault that line goes through,
  And frequent now the crossing rack;
And who shall pierce the upper sky,
And count the spheres? Not I, not I!

Sweet year, it was not hope you brought,
  Nor after toil and storm repose,
But a fresh growth of tender thought,
  And all of love my spirit knows.
You let my lifetime pause, and bade
The noontide dial cast no shade.

If fate and nature screen from me
  The sovran front I bowed before,
And set the glorious creature free,
  Whom I would clasp, detain, adore;
If I forego that strange delight,
Must all be lost? Not quite, not quite.

Die, little love, without complaint,
  Whom Honour standeth by to shrive:
Assoilèd from all selfish taint,
  Die, Love, whom Friendship will survive.
Nor heat nor folly gave thee birth;
And briefness does but raise thy worth.

Let the grey hermit Friendship hoard
  Whatever sainted Love bequeathed,

And in some hidden scroll record
The vows in pious moments breathed.
Vex not the lost with idle suit,
Oh lonely heart, be mute, be mute.

Parting

As when a traveller, forced to journey back,
Takes coin by coin, and gravely counts them o'er,
Grudging each payment, fearing lest he lack,
Before he can regain the friendly shore;
So reckoned I your sojourn, day by day,
So grudged I every week that dropt away.

And as a prisoner, doomed and bound, upstarts
From shattered dreams of wedlock and repose,
At sudden rumblings of the market-carts,
Which bring to town the strawberry and the rose,
And wakes to meet sure death; so shuddered I,
To hear you meditate your gay Good-bye.

But why not gay? For, if there's aught you lose,
It is but drawing off a wrinkled glove
To turn the keys of treasuries, free to choose
Throughout the hundred-chambered house of love,
This pathos draws from you, though true and kind,
Only bland pity for the left-behind.

We part; you comfort one bereaved, unmanned;
You calmly chide the silence and the grief;
You touch me once with light and courteous hand,
And with a sense of something like relief
You turn away from what may seem to be
Too hard a trial of your charity.

So closes in the life of life; so ends
The soaring of the spirit. What remains?
To take whate'er the Muse's mother lends,
One sweet sad thought in many soft refrains
And half reveal in Coan gauze of rhyme
A cherished image of your joyous prime.

To the Muse

Guide me with song, kind Muse, to death's dark shade;
Keep me in sweet accord with boy and maid,
Still in fresh blooms of art and truth arrayed.

Bear with old age, blithe child of memory!
Time loves the good; and youth and thou art nigh
To Sophocles and Plato, till they die.

Playmate of freedom, queen of nightingales,
Draw near; thy voice grows faint: my spirit fails
Still with thee, whether sleep or death assails.

RICHARD WATSON DIXON

[R. W. Dixon was born May 5, 1833, and died in January, 1900. He was a schoolfellow of Edward Burne-Jones at King Edward's School, Birmingham, and carried on the friendship at Oxford, where, with William Morris and others of the set, he founded the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. His first volume, *Christ's Company and other Poems*, appeared in 1861; a second, *Historical Odes and other Poems*, followed in 1864; in the previous year he had won the Oxford prize for a sacred poem, the subject being *St. John in Patmos*. He took Orders in 1858, and after serving for a few years as second master of Carlisle High School, became a Minor Canon of the Cathedral. In 1875 he was presented to the vicarage of Hayton, and in 1883 to that of Warkworth, both in the same diocese. The first volume of his *History of the Church of England from the abolition of the Roman Jurisdiction* appeared in 1877, the fifth and last after his death. The rest of his poetical work was published in the following order: *Mano*, 1883; *Odes and Eclogues*, 1884; *Lyrical Poems*, 1887; *The Story of Eudocia and her Brothers*, 1888; *Last Poems* (a posthumous volume), 1905. In 1895 a selection of his later poems was published under the title of *Songs and Odes;* and in 1909 a larger selection with a memoir by Robert Bridges, and present Poet Laureate.]

In most literary coteries which become famous there are members who, while respected for their talents within the circle, escape public recognition because they pursue the common ideal with a divided will. R. W. Dixon undoubtedly occupied a prominent place in that brotherhood of Oxford undergraduates in the fifties of last century, which included Burne-Jones and William Morris and, as an outside member, Gabriel Rossetti. But while still at Oxford he had discovered a taste for historical studies, winning the Arnold prize for an essay on *The Close of the Tenth Century of the Christian Era*, and on leaving the University and taking orders he began, in the leisured post of a Cathedral minor canonry, to write that picturesque chronicle history of the English Reformation by which he is best known. Later church preferments were all of the kind which added to his professional labours, and as his History retained for the rest of his life the first claim upon his leisure, poetry was well-nigh crowded out. This is not a thing of which

any one can reasonably complain. The History is at least an accomplished fact, and its merits as literature are acknowledged; while there is no evidence that Dixon saw his way at all clearly in poetry. He was experimenting to the last, and none of his experiments held out much prospect of a great success. But it is worth pointing out how little time Dixon could give to poetry, because poetry was not with him, as it was with his friend Morris, very much a matter of improvisation; it was an art calling for long study and assiduous practice; and his first book shows that he had many of the qualities which might in other circumstances have led to a greater measure of success.

His first book, *Christ's Company*, published in 1861, three years after Morris's *Defence of Guenevere*, had even less chance of attracting popular attention. The *Defence of Guenevere*, though it might surprise by occasional quaintness and offend by the absence of Tennysonian polish, contained stories of human passion which are at any rate intelligible, and, as we know, it made on many sympathetic minds an ineffaceable impression. Dixon's poems were at the opposite pole to these straightforward tales in easy verse. The first impression they gave was of queerness. The vocabulary was queer, there were words like *agraffes*, *stroom*, *graith*, which are not known to the dictionary, and lines like "the flax was bolled upon my crine;" the rhymes were queer and assertive, "only, conely;" "writhing, high thing;" often the syntax was queer. "Who," asks St. Peter, "shall ban my sorrow?" and this is the answer he gives:

> "Not earth that drinks my tears; not heavenly sky;
> Not they who took with me the bread and wine;
> Perhaps not God who looks on me,
> The Father thinking of the tree
> Of cursing in me rooted, see
> The flinders; not the victim, He,
> My sorrow!"

But no less evident to an attentive reader is the fact that in each poem the writer has something to say which he is earnest about saying, and that he is saying it as well as he can, with his eye upon some ideal beauty which he is endeavouring to reproduce. What is unfortunate is that through want of skill the artist's hand does not always answer to his imagination, and thus the reader is sorely puzzled to make out the meaning. *St. Mary Magdalene* is perhaps

the most successful of these early poems. It has the accent of Rossetti, and could never have been written without his influence. But it has a beauty of its own; and if it had been furnished with an argument, so that the ordinary reader could have mastered the general meaning, it might have become as popular in the Butterfield period of Churchmanship as many of Miss Rossetti's picturesque poems. The *St. John* contains a fine series of pictures of "the seven archangels with his army each," done in the same Pre-Raphaelite manner. And many of the descriptions of natural scenery with which the book abounds are in the same style of careful detail.

> "Here I lie along the trunk
> That swings the heavy sluice-door sunk
> In the water, which outstreams
> In little runlets from its seams."

But occasionally we have passages of description of quite a different character, addressed not to the memory but to the imagination. This is how the Bride of Christ is seen in St. John's vision:—

> "Her form was beautiful and wondrous tall,
> Her eyes were like half-moons in cloudy smoke,
> Her height was as a pillar in a wall,
> Her hair was as a flowery banner free,
> Her glory like a fountain in the rocks,
> Her graciousness like vines to tender flocks,
>
> Her eyes like lilies shaken by the bees,
> Her hair a net of moonbeams in a cloud,
> Her thinness like a row of youngling trees
> And golden bees hummed round her in a crowd."

Dixon's second volume followed the first after a three years' interval, and while containing a few poems in the early manner, was chiefly interesting for its new experiments. It bore the name *Historical Odes* from the poems upon Wellington and Marlborough with which it opened: poems which it is to be feared there have been few to praise, and very few to love. The historical interest is rightly subordinated to that of character, but the sentiments, though excellent, do not succeed in finding for themselves a memorable expression. But there were experiments also in other directions. There are tales of classical mythology and there are romantic tales, both of which modes of writing retained their at-

traction for the poet to the last. There are also various odes upon such subjects as *Sympathy*, *Rapture*, and *Departing Youth*. Finally, there was one song, *The Feathers of the Willow*, of which it was said by a fine critic that it would be difficult to find anywhere "two stanzas so crowded with the pathos of nature and landscape."

Dixon published no more poetry for twenty years. In 1878 the late Father Hopkins, S. J., who admired the early volumes, introduced himself to him and then made him known to Mr. Robert Bridges, and the stimulus of this poetic sympathy provoked an aftermath in a series of fine odes, dealing chiefly with the thoughts and experiences of age, which remain Dixon's most original and effective contribution to poetry.

H. C. BEECHING.

SONG

The feathers of the willow
Are half of them grown yellow
  Above the swelling stream;
And ragged are the bushes,
And rusty now the rushes,
  And wild the clouded gleam.

The thistle now is older,
His stalk begins to moulder,
  His head is white as snow;
The branches all are barer,
The linnet's song is rarer,
  The robin pipeth now.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF

Rise in their place the woods: the trees have cast,
Like earth to earth, their children: now they stand
Above the graves where lie their very last:
Each pointing with her empty hand
And mourning o'er the russet floor,
Naked and dispossessed;
The queenly sycamore,
The linden, and the aspen, and the rest.

But thou, fair birch, doubtful to laugh or weep,
Who timorously dost keep
From the sad fallen ring thy face away;
Wouldst thou look to the heavens which wander grey,
The unstilled clouds, slow mounting on their way?
They not regard thee, neither do they send
One breath to wake thy sighs, nor gently tend
Thy sorrow or thy smile to passion's end.

Lo, there on high the unlighted moon is hung,
A cloud among the clouds: she giveth pledge,
Which none from hope debars,
Of hours that shall the naked boughs re-fledge
In seasons high: her drifted train among
Musing she leads the silent song,
Grave mistress of white clouds, as lucid queen of stars.

Ode on Conflicting Claims

Hast thou no right to joy,
Oh youth grown old, who palest with the thought
Of the measureless annoy,
The pain and havoc wrought
By Fate on man: and of the many men,
The unfed, the untaught,
Who groan beneath that adamantine chain
Whose tightness kills, whose slackness whips the flow
Of waves of futile woe:
Hast thou no right to joy?

Thou thinkest in thy mind
In thee it were unkind
To revel in the liquid Hyblian store,
While more and more the horror and the shame,
The pity and the woe grow more and more,
Persistent still to claim
The filling of thy mind.

Thou thinkest that if none in all the rout
Who compass thee about

Turn full their soul to that which thou desirest.
Nor seek to gain thy goal,
Beauty, the heart of beauty,
The sweetness, yea, the thoughtful sweetness,
The one right way in each, the best,
Which satisfies the soul,
The firmness lost in softness, the touch of typical meetness,
Which lets the soul have rest;
Those things to which thyself aspirest:—
That they, though born to quaff the bowl divine,
As thou art, yield to the strict law of duty;
And thou from them must thine example take,
Leave the amaranthine vine,
And the prized joy forsake.

Oh thou, forgone in this,
Long struggling with a world that is amiss,
Reach some old volume down,
Some poet's book, which in thy bygone years,
Thou hast consumed with joys as keen as fears,
When o'er it thou wouldst hang with rapturous frown,
Admiring with sweet envy all
The exquisite of words, the lance-like fall
Of mighty verses, each on each,
The sweetness which did never cloy,
(So wrought of thought ere touched with speech),
And ask again, Hast thou no right to joy?
Take the most precious tones that thunderstruck thine ears
In gentler days gone by:
And if they yield no more the old ecstasy,
Then give thyself to tears.

Ode: The Spirit Wooed

Art thou gone so far,
Beyond the poplar tops, beyond the sunset-bar,
Beyond the purple cloud that swells on high
In the tender fields of sky?

Leanest thou thy head
On sunset's golden breadth? is thy wide hair spread
To his solemn kisses? Yet grow thou not pale
As he pales and dies: nor more my eyes avail
To search his cloud-drawn bed.

O come thou again!
Be seen on the falling slope: let thy footsteps pass
Where the river cuts with his blue scythe the grass:
Be heard in the voice that across the river comes
From the distant wood, even when the stilly rain
Is made to cease by light winds: come again,
As out of yon grey glooms,
When the cloud grows luminous and shiftily riven,
Forth comes the moon, the sweet surprise of heaven:
And her footfall light
Drops on the multiplied wave: her face is seen
In evening's pallor green:
And she waxes bright
With the death of the tinted air: yea, brighter grows
In sunset's gradual close.
To earth from heaven comes she,
So come thou to me.

Oh, lay thou thy head
On sunset's breadth of gold, thy hair bespread
In his solemn kisses: but grow thou not pale
As he pales and dies, lest eye no more avail
To search thy cloud-drawn bed.

Can the weeping eye
Always feel light through mists that never dry!
Can empty arms alone for ever fill
Enough the breast? Can echo answer still,
When the voice has ceased to cry?

Ode on Advancing Age

Thou goest more and more
To the silent things: thy hair is hoar,
Emptier thy weary face: like to the shore
Far-ruined, and the desolate billow white,
That recedes and leaves it waif-wrinkled, gap-rocked, weak.
The shore and the billow white
Groan, they cry and rest not: they would speak,
And call the eternal Night
To cease them for ever, bidding new things issue
From her cold tissue:
Night, that is ever young, nor knows decay,
Though older by eternity than they.

Go down upon the shore.
The breakers dash, the smitten spray drops to the roar;
The spit upsprings, and drops again,
Where'er the white waves clash in the main.
Their sound is but one: 'tis the cry
That has risen from of old to the sky,
'Tis their silence!
Go now from the shore
Far-ruined: the grey shingly floor
To thy crashing step answers, the doteril cries,
And on dipping wing flies:
'Tis their silence!

And thou, oh thou,
To that wild silence sinkest now.
No more remains to thee than the cry of silence, the cry
Of the waves, of the shore, of the bird to the sky.
Thy bald eyes neath as bald a brow
Ask but what Nature gives
To the inarticulate cries
Of the waves, of the shore, of the bird.
Earth in earth thou art being interred:
No longer in thee lives
The lordly essence which was unlike all,

That was thy flower of soul the imperial
Glory that separated thee
From all others that might be.

Thy dog hath died before.
Didst thou not mark him? did he not neglect
What roused his rapture once, but still loved thee?
Till, weaker grown, was he not fain reject
Thy pitying hand, thy meat and drink,
For all thou couldst implore?
Then, at the last, how mournfully
Did not his eyelids sink
With wearied sighs?
He sought at last that never-moving night
Which is the same in darkness as in light,
The closing of the eyes.

So, Age, thou dealest us
To the elements: but no! Resume thy pride,
O man, that musest thus.
Be to the end what thou hast been before:
The ancient joy shall wrap thee still—the tide
Return upon the shore.

THOMAS GORDON HAKE

[Born 1809, of an old Devonshire family on the father's side, his mother being a Gordon, aunt of Gordon of Khartoum. Educated at Lewes, at St. George's Hospital, and at Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities, where he acquired remarkable medical and surgical knowledge. His very lively *Memoirs of Eighty Years*, published 1892, show that during the first half of his long life his mind was occupied with these studies; and, except for one or two youthful ventures in verse and prose—the drama called *Piromides* and the romance *Vates*—he gave himself up to science, not to poetry. In 1866, however, he privately printed *The World's Epitaph*, which led to an intimacy with D. G. Rossetti and his group of friends. His medical assistance made him for some years, as W. M. Rossetti said, "the earthly Providence of the Rossetti family." On the other hand, their influence helped forward his revived poetical instincts, and between 1872 and 1890 he wrote and published many volumes of verse, including *Madeline* (1871), *Parables and Tales* (1872), *New Symbols* (1876), and *The New Day* (1890); and in 1894 Mrs. Meynell printed a volume of Selections from his works, with a preface. He died in January, 1895.]

Thomas Gordon Hake was a man of many experiences, many accomplishments, and many moods. In manner he was "polished and urbane;" in aspect, according to his friend Theodore Watts-Dunton, to whom Hake dedicated his *New Day*, he was, "with the single exception of Lord Tennyson, the most poetical-looking poet" his friend had ever seen. Till past middle life he was a practising physician, the author of several learned books and papers, and a votary of Nature-study. But from eleven years old he had been a student of Shakespeare, and one side of him, from boyhood onwards, was passionately devoted to poetry; so that when, at the age of nearly sixty, leisure, travels in Italy, and the beauty of some English woods in spring had made him take seriously to the writing of verse, none of his few intimate friends was surprised at the high standard that he reached at once. One reader, who was as yet a stranger to him, was so charmed that, immediately they were introduced, the two became close friends; and to this friendship Hake may be said to have owed a strong

poetic impulse, and the world the enjoyment of many rare and original poems. The new friend was D. G. Rossetti, and for several years after 1869 Hake lived in close touch with the Rossetti circle. As is stated above, his medical services were invaluable during Gabriel's worst days, in and about 1872, so that the poet-painter's brother rightly described him as "the Providence" of the family. Gabriel Rossetti went so far in his admiration as to review one of Hake's books in *The Academy:* a testimonial which of itself secured for the new poet the allegiance of all Rossettians.

None the less, one clever artist and writer attached to that circle could not resist giving a rather malicious account of Hake's method of composition. This was W. B. Scott, who in his *Autobiographical Notes* (ii, p. 178) thus describes Hake at Kelmscott, whither in 1874 he had taken Rossetti for a rest-cure. While young George Hake was attending to the patient,

"his father, the doctor himself, was developing 'the ideal' in solitude in the room below at about two lines a day. From the clearing away of breakfast there he sat by the fire, a pencil in one hand and a folded piece of paper in the other. On the table near him lay a little heap of other pieces of paper, his failures at the improvement of the same couplet in various transformations, sometimes expressing quite different meanings. The old gentleman in the character of a poet had interested all of us. He had retired from medicine determined to cultivate poetry. But he was really accomplishing his object by perseverance and determined study, utterly pooh-poohing the maxim that if a man has not made a good poem at twenty-five, he never will."

The picture is overdone, but it helps to explain the elaboration which sometimes causes Hake's poems to be not easy to understand at a first reading. His prose *Memoirs of Eighty Years* (1892) contains some pages of poetical theory which also, from their very abstruseness, help to explain why the poems are difficult. But their music makes a universal appeal; their reading of Nature has the exactitude to be expected from a trained observer; they are, as Rossetti so often insisted, thoroughly original. The two longer ones here given are from the volume which his literary friends thought the best, *New Symbols;* two sonnets follow from *The New Day,* following his beloved Shakespeare in their form and dwelling in thought upon the good things that are to follow when a close study of Nature shall have driven away the clouds with which Ignorance darkens the spirit of man. EDITOR.

[From *New Symbols* (1876)]

The Snake-charmer

I

The forest rears on lifted arms
  A world of leaves, whence verdurous light
Shakes through the shady depths and warms
  Proud tree and stealthy parasite,
There where those cruel coils enclasp
The trunks they strangle in their grasp.

II

An old man creeps from out the woods,
  Breaking the vine's entangling spell;
He thrids the jungle's solitudes
  O'er bamboos rotting where they fell;
Slow down the tiger's path he wends
Where at the pool the jungle ends.

III

No moss-greened alley tells the trace
  Of his lone step, no sound is stirred,
Even when his tawny hands displace
  The boughs, that backward sweep unheard:
His way as noiseless as the trail
Of the swift snake and pilgrim snail.

IV

The old snake-charmer,—once he played
  Soft music for the serpent's ear,
But now his cunning hand is stayed;
  He knows the hour of death is near.
And all that live in brake and bough,
All know the brand is on his brow.

V

Yet where his soul is he must go:
He crawls along from tree to tree.
The old snake-charmer, doth he know
If snake or beast of prey he be?
Bewildered at the pool he lies
And sees as through a serpent's eyes.

VI

Weeds wove with white-flowered lily crops
Drink of the pool, and serpents hie
To the thin brink as noonday drops,
And in the froth-daubed rushes lie.
There rests he now with fastened breath
'Neath a kind sun to bask in death.

VII

The pool is bright with glossy dyes
And cast-up bubbles of decay:
A green death-leaven overlies
Its mottled scum, where shadows play
As the snake's hollow coil, fresh shed,
Rolls in the wind across its bed.

VIII

No more the wily note is heard
From his full flute—the riving air
That tames the snake, decoys the bird,
Worries the she-wolf from her lair.
Fain would he bid its parting breath
Drown in his ears the voice of death.

IX

Still doth his soul's vague longing skim
The pool beloved: he hears the hiss
That siffles at the sedgy rim,
Recalling days of former bliss,
And the death-drops, that fall in showers,
Seem honied dews from shady flowers.

X

There is a rustle of the breeze
And twitter of the singing bird;
He snatches at the melodies
And his faint lips again are stirred;
The olden sounds are in his ears;
But still the snake its crest uprears.

XI

His eyes are swimming in the mist
That films the earth like serpent's breath:
And now,—as if a serpent hissed,—
The husky whisperings of Death
Fill ear and brain—he looks around—
Serpents seem matted o'er the ground.

XII

Soon visions of past joys bewitch
His crafty soul; his hands would set
Death's snare, while now his fingers twitch
The tasselled reed as 'twere his net.
But his thin lips no longer fill
The woods with song; his flute is still.

XIII

Those lips still quaver to the flute,
But fast the life-tide ebbs away;
Those lips now quaver and are mute,
But nature throbs in breathless play:
Birds are in open song, the snakes
Are watching in the silent brakes.

XIV

In sudden fear of snares unseen
The birds like crimson sunset swarm,
All gold and purple, red and green,
And seek each other for the charm.
Lizards dart up the feathery trees
Like shadows of a rainbow breeze.

XV

The wildered birds again have rushed
Into the charm,—it is the hour
When the shrill forest-note is hushed,
And they obey the serpent's power,—
Drawn to its gaze with troubled whirr,
As by the thread of falconer.

XVI

As 'twere to feed, on slanting wings
They drop within the serpent's glare:
Eyes flashing fire in burning rings
Which spread into the dazzled air;
They flutter in the glittering coils;
The charmer dreads the serpent's toils.

XVII

While Music swims away in death
Man's spell is passing to his slaves:
The snake feeds on the charmer's breath,
The vulture screams, the parrot raves,
The lone hyena laughs and howls,
The tiger from the jungle growls.

XVIII

Then mounts the eagle—flame-flecked folds
Belt its proud plumes; a feather falls:
He hears the death-cry, he beholds
The king-bird in the serpent's thralls,
He looks with terror on the feud,—
And the sun shines through dripping blood.

XIX

The deadly spell a moment gone—
Birds, from a distant Paradise,
Strike the winged signal and have flown,
Trailing rich hues through azure skies:
The serpent falls; like demon wings
The far-out branching cedar swings.

XX

The wood swims round; the pool and skies
  Have met; the death-drops down that cheek
Fall faster; for the serpent's eyes
  Grow human, and the charmer's seek.
A gaze like man's directs the dart
Which now is buried at his heart.

XXI

The monarch of the world is cold:
  The charm he bore has passed away:
The serpent gathers up its fold
  To wind about its human prey.
The red mouth darts a dizzy sting,
And clenches the eternal ring.

The Painter

I

"Summer has done her work," the painter cries,
  And saunters down his garden by the shore.
"The fig is cracked and dry; upon it lies,
  In crystals, the sweet oozing of its core.
The peach melts in its pink and yellow beam;
  Grapes cluster to the earth in diadems
  Of dripping purple; from their slender stems,
'Mid paler leaves, the dark-green citrons gleam.

II

"Summer has done her work; she, lingering, sees
  Her shady places glare: yet cooler grow
The breezes as they stir the sunny trees
  Whose shaking twigs their ruby berries sow.
Ripe is the fairy-grass, we breathe its seeds.
  But, hanging o'er the rocks that belt the shore,
  Safe from the sea, above its bustling roar,
Here ripen, still, the blossom-swinging weeds.

III

"Pale cressets on the summer waters shine,
No ripple there but flings its jet of fire.
Rich amber wrack still bronzing in the brine
Is tossed ashore in daylight to expire.
A wallowing wave the rocky shoal enwreathes;
From the loose spray, cascades of bubbles fall
Down steeps whose watery, coral-mantled wall
Drinks of the billow, and the sunshine breathes.

IV

"Summer has done her work, but mine remains.
How shall I shape these ever-murmuring waves,
How interweave these rumours and refrains,
These wind-tossed echoes of the listening caves?
The restless rocky roar, the billow's splash,
And the all-hushing shingle—hark! it blends,
In open melody that never ends,
The drone, the cavern-whisper, and the clash.

V

"And this wide ruin of a once new shore
Scooped by new waves to waves of solid rock,
Dark-shelving, white-veined, as if marbled o'er
By the fresh surf still trickling block to block!
O worn-out waves of night, long set aside—
The moulded storm is dead, contending rage,—
Like monster-breakers of a by-gone age!
And now the gentle waters o'er you ride.

VI

"Can my hand darken in swift rings of flight
The air-path cut by the black sea-gulls' wings,
Then fill the dubious track with influent light,
While to my eyes the vanished vision clings?
While at their sudden whirr the billows start,
Can my hand hush the cymbal-sounding sea,
That breaks with louder roar its reverie
As those fast pinions into silence dart?

VII

"Press on, ye summer waves, still gently swell,—
The rainbow's parent-waters over-run!
Can my poor brush your snaky greenness tell,
Raising your sheeny bellies to the sun?
What touch can pour you in yon pool of blue
Circled with surging froth of liquid snow,
Which now dissolves to emerald, now below
Glazes the sunken rocks with umber hue?

VIII

"Summer has done her work, dare I begin—
Painting a desert, though my pencil craves
To intertwine all tints with heaven akin?
Nature has flung her palette to the waves!
Then bid my eyes on cloudy landscape dwell,—
Not revel in thy blaze. O beauteous scene!
Between thy art and mine is nature's screen,—
Transparent only to the soul,—farewell!

IX

"Oh! could I paint thee with these ravished eyes,—
Catch in my hollow palm thy overflow,
Who broadcast fling'st away thy witcheries!
Yet would I not desponding turn and go.
Be it a feeble hand to thee I raise,
'Tis still the worship of the soul within:
Summer has done her work,—let mine begin,
Though as the grass it wither in thy blaze."

[From *The New Day* (1890)] [1]

Sonnet X

Genius and Poetry should still advance
As Nature year by year extends her pale,
Till widens past all reach the wide expanse,
Disclosing heights that only She can scale.

[1] Written to a friend whom Hake believed to be the "science poet" of the future.

Science fulfils the poet's prophecy—
  Brings close the landscape that he saw afar,
Even as the glass that takes and gives the sky
  Brings home from realms of cloud some burning star.
So even within the farthest galaxy
  The science-poet knows what worlds are growing,
Where Nature's votaries of all wisdom free,
  With far-off thought akin to his are glowing.
Seize on the deathless prize, far-reaching friend!
And yet let one same scroll our memories blend.

Sonnet xxxii

The thousand volumes of poetic lore
  By turns have fortunes and misfortunes made;
One day these piles shall meet the eye no more,
  And in their own still honoured dust be laid.
Great work leaves only greater to be done.
  New goals are straight ahead; then onward press,—
On Nature's open course the gauntlet run;
  She basks in glory at a new success.
The poetry of old is built on dream—
  A dream of beauty never coming true!—
But Science shadows forth the nobler theme
  Of wondrous Nature; be it sung by you!
Science and Nature, waiting hand in hand,
Now on the threshold of the New Day stand.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

[CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI was born in London on December 5, 1830. She was the youngest child of Gabriele and Lavinia Rossetti and a sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Her first published verses were printed in the Pre-Raphaelite magazine, *The Germ*, in 1850. Her father died in 1854, and thenceforward she lived, always in London, with her mother. Her first volume (other than a little privately printed experiment issued in 1847) was called *Goblin Market and other Poems*, and was published in 1862. Other volumes of poetry followed in 1866 and 1881, and she also published several devotional works in prose. A considerable number of unpublished poems were collected and issued after her death by her surviving brother, Mr. W. M. Rossetti. Her life was one of great seclusion, devoted to religious exercises and works of charity. A very severe illness in middle life left her health gravely affected, and for many years before her death she was much of an invalid. She died on December 29, 1894.]

The peculiar gift of Christina Rossetti is one of the rarest in poetry, if not of the greatest: it is the gift of song. She had a fountain of music within her which never ceased altogether in her life, strangely as her life seemed to narrow itself and her shy difficult spirit to shrink from experience. She was a cloistered soul that mistrusted the attraction of the world, turning away from it, not indeed in fear, but with a conviction of its vanity. The world had all the charm for her that it has for an exquisite and sensuous nature; yet her rejection of it, with whatever sacrifice of herself, was sober and deliberate, for she did not know the great disruptive forces of illumination and conversion. She was inexperienced even in the fevour of her saintliness. Her fine powers of mind and imagination were kept in a narrow groove by a puritan rule which she adopted from the very first and held to the end. She would not move outside it, surrounded though she was with some of the fullest and most striking opportunities, æsthetic and intellectual, of her generation. It is a curiously grey and insular story for a poetess of her origin and endowment, and the strangest part of it all is that her vivid lyrical impulse never entirely left her or lost its freedom.

The world of her own, the world she elected to live in, had this

one opening towards the outer air, but she made the most of it. Having protected herself against life, once for all, by a code of duty unnaturally arid, in her poetry she drew close to a kind of beauty that was all earthly warmth and fragrance. She who moved in fact through a maze of anxious scruples could here pass out, with a power of undimmed enjoyment, into an almost Hellenic sunshine. There is to be found in her earlier poems, and not only in these, a franker and simpler delight in the budding and flowering and fruiting of nature, in the turn of the quick tractable English seasons, in the happy grace of birds and furry creatures, than has often been seen in a literature in which, for the most part, the natural world is made the very groundwork of philosophy. Christina Rossetti had no need of a philosophy, for she never doubted the meaning of life, sorely as she might doubt herself. When she could escape from this perplexity, therefore, she was as free as a swallow, and her native humanity, clear and sane and direct, enjoyed the earth and its increase without a question. The dawn and flush of spring, the rapture of young love, the lark-song of a summer cornfield—she knew and uttered such moments with a music that has their very own sense of wonder and newness and liberation. She does not study or describe, but her verse is continually full of country weather, airs blowing and sunlight falling—images caught and reflected in a memory as lucid, as keen and thoughtless, as a child's.

The beautiful originality of her poems in this mood is of a kind that makes her the truest "Pre-Raphaelite" of all the famous group. If the word was meant to imply a way of looking at things with new eyes and an ingenuous mind, it suited her long after her brother and the rest had diverged upon their different lines. They were soon corrupted by knowledge and reflection, and passed on to maturity. Christina never matched their achievement, but neither could they show anything like the spring-charm, the wild-fruit savour that her work so often had even in later years. Her fine felicity in romance sprang straight from an imagination which in a sense was always as bare and clear as the room where she sits in her brother's painting of the Annunciation. She could let her fancy riot, as in *Goblin Market*, with wayward profusion; but its opulence is that of a dream, with no attachment to life and ready to vanish in a moment. It was an imagination acutely sensitive to the colour and shape and touch and taste of things—of queer and grotesque things as much as any other. But the mere world could not lay hold on it, and for this very reason it stands out with a singular

shining freshness. If ever in her work she ventured, as she seldom did, into actual life, it was evidently because she was tempted by the example of Mrs. Browning; and she was then betrayed into a kind of sentimentality very unlike Mrs. Browning's passionate intellectual honesty. In the world of dreams her brilliance, audacity, even humour, are always alive and true.

Her lyrical youth survived in her, then, carrying with it youth's obstinate anxieties, but never absorbed, either to its enrichment or its extinction, in a wider range of interests. She clung to the faith she had found in her earliest years and allowed it, for hard reasons that seemed good to her, to cut her off from a fuller emotional life. It was not so much any mystical ardour that saved her from embitterment as the mere kindly naturalness of the impulses she crossed. The flame of her spirit was bright, by its own human virtue, through all her long and grievous self-vexation; and there are poems of hers, those that are now perhaps most often returned to, in which it glows with a profoundly attaching and appealing beauty. It might be a slender handful of experience that fed the fire; but there could be nothing loftier than the sincerity with which the single-minded votaress of an ideal passion refused to misunderstand or to misprize the memory she guarded. The poetry she dedicated to it has the charm of a perfect loyalty to the sweetness of earthly love. If, for trust in its power, she lacked a certain generosity of soul, she would not for that deny it, or attempt to give it any name but its own. No songs or elegies of love show a simpler and straighter sense of its magic than do hers, and in few is it expressed with a melody more fervent and eager. Their pathos is very great, for even in disappointment and disillusion they retain the sensitive candour of youth, with all its power of suffering and all its instinct for happiness.

But the burden of her creed lay heavily on her—so heavily, so little to her encouragement or even her peace of mind, that it seems alien to her, as though it must have been imposed, as perhaps it was to some extent, by a stronger will from without. Her elder sister was apparently altogether satisfied and reassured by the support of a narrow faith; but Christina was not satisfied, she was only determined to be; and she was far indeed, even to the end, from ever being reassured. She was haunted and dismayed by the thought of her unworthiness, not inspired by it; and this discord in her nature affected her genius unfortunately, as was natural; the wonder is that it did not ruin and stifle it. A monotony of mood as-

serted itself more and more in her work. She held fast to the idea that the only road to harmony is through renunciation; but the passion she poured into the act of self-sacrifice, strong as it was, had not the substance, had rather, perhaps, a too pure and artless simplicity, to create a positive life for her in the ideal. She missed the freedom of adventure and exultation that is discovered there by the true mystic. The poetry of Christina Rossetti touches this height at moments, but generally it is caught by the way on the thorny sense of her own ingratitude and faithlessness, and preoccupied to excess with the stern contrast between the enchantments of the world and the promises of eternity.

None the less her "devotional" poetry, though wanting vigour of thought, is always distinguished, and of rare splendour at its best. The movement of her genius had a peculiar dignity; and though she wrote much that has no great value, much that is merely tentative and but half-expressed, she wrote almost nothing which does not show the controlled nerve of an admirable style. Her command of rhythm and metre, by no means faultless, had a very remarkable scope. She adopted or invented a great variety of measures, and used them with an ease which falls short of real mastery only through lacking the last edge of care; her spontaneity is equally unforced, whether it flings out its own irregular but living shape or whether it fills a traditional one, and some of her effects of repeated rhymes and refrains have the happiest originality. And mastery, with no qualification whatever, is displayed in the robustness and purity of her diction. She learned it from the Bible, of course, but there was something in it which she perhaps learned also from the only other book she studied much, the *Divine Comedy*. If she could marshal a pomp of words with prophetic fervour, she could give to homely turns and phrases a stateliness and gravity which at times is not far from the art of Dante. Such sympathy for words, such perception of their value and ring, is for whatever reason rarely a feminine gift; and in all this Christina Rossetti had a wider reach and a surer taste than any woman who has written our language—she, the one to whom it was not native.

But her place among all great poets is not less certain. In spite of her limitations and her thwarted development, she had the true heart of song; and by virtue of it she has her own supremacy. Song which seems to draw its life from the dew and breeze of summer, warm ripeness that is yet freshness, transparent sunshine that has still the suggestion of clean showers—such is the song of

Christina Rossetti, and her slender achievement is in its way unique. Life should have fostered a genius and nature like hers. Her instinct was entirely lyrical, and even when she wished to write allegories and moralities, *The Prince's Progress* or the *Convent Threshold*, pure irresponsible music would break out uncontrollably in her argument. It must seem one of the calamities of poetry that she should have missed a fuller growth and that so much of her work should have been overhung with sterile shadows. Away from them she uttered some of the most singing melodies, blithe and sad, to be found in English verse.

PERCY LUBBOCK.

NOBLE SISTERS

"Now did you mark a falcon,
  Sister dear, sister dear,
Flying toward my window
  In the morning cool and clear?
With jingling bells about her neck,
  But what beneath her wing?
It may have been a ribbon,
  Or it may have been a ring."—
    "I marked a falcon swooping
      At the break of day:
    And for your love, my sister dove,
      I 'frayed the thief away."—

"Or did you spy a ruddy hound,
  Sister fair and tall,
Went snuffing round my garden bound,
  Or crouched by my bower wall?
With a silken leash about his neck;
  But in his mouth may be
A chain of gold and silver links,
  Or a letter writ to me."—
    "I heard a hound, highborn sister,
      Stood baying at the moon:
    I rose and drove him from your wall
      Lest you should wake too soon."—

"Or did you meet a pretty page
Sat swinging on the gate?
Sat whistling whistling like a bird,
Or may be slept too late:
With eaglets broidered on his cap,
And eaglets on his glove.
If you had turned his pockets out,
You had found some pledge of love."—
"I met him at this daybreak,
Scarce the east was red:
Lest the creaking gate should anger you
I packed him home to bed."—

"O patience, sister! Did you see
A young man tall and strong,
Swift-footed to uphold the right
And to uproot the wrong,
Come home across the desolate sea
To woo me for his wife?
And in his heart my heart is locked,
And in his life my life."—
"I met a nameless man, sister,
Who loitered round our door:
I said: Her husband loves her much
And yet she loves him more."—

"Fie, sister, fie, a wicked lie,
A lie, a wicked lie!
I have none other love but him,
Nor will have till I die.
And you have turned him from our door,
And stabbed him with a lie:
I will go seek him thro' the world
In sorrow till I die."—
"Go seek in sorrow, sister,
And find in sorrow too:
If thus you shame our father's name
My curse go forth with you."

Dream Land

Where sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmed sleep:
  Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
  Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight cold and lorn
  And water springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
  That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is toward the west,
  The purple land.
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain,
She cannot feel the rain
  Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest, at the heart's core
  Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake;
Night that no morn shall break,
Till joy shall overtake
  Her perfect peace.

Bride-song

[From *The Prince's Progress*]

Day is over, the day that wore.
What is this that comes through the door,
The face covered, the feet before?
  This that coming takes his breath;
This Bride not seen, to be seen no more
  Save of Bridegroom Death?

Veiled figures carrying her
Sweep by yet make no stir;
There is a smell of spice and myrrh,
  A bride-chant burdened with one name;
The bride-song rises steadier
  Than the torches' flame:—

"Too late for love, too late for joy,
  Too late, too late!
You loitered on the road too long,
  You trifled at the gate:
The enchanted dove upon her branch
  Died without a mate;
The enchanted princess in her tower
  Slept, died, behind the grate;
Her heart was starving all this while
  You made it wait.

"Ten years ago, five years ago,
  One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
  Though somewhat slow;
Then you had known her living face
  Which now you cannot know:
The frozen fountain would have leaped,
  The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
  To melt the snow.

"Is she fair now as she lies?
Once she was fair;
Meet queen for any kingly king,
With gold-dust on her hair.
Now these are poppies in her locks,
White poppies she must wear;
Must wear a veil to shroud her face
And the want graven there:
Or is the hunger fed at length,
Cast off the care?

"We never saw her with a smile
Or with a frown;
Her bed seemed never soft to her,
Though tossed of down;
She little heeded what she wore,
Kirtle, or wreath, or gown;
We think her white brows often ached
Beneath her crown,
Till silvery hairs showed in her locks
That used to be so brown.

"We never heard her speak in haste;
Her tones were sweet,
And modulated just so much
As it was meet:
Her heart sat silent through the noise
And concourse of the street.
There was no hurry in her hands,
No hurry in her feet;
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
That she might run to greet.

"You should have wept her yesterday,
Wasting upon her bed:
But wherefore should you weep to-day
That she is dead?
Lo we who love weep not to-day,
But crown her royal head.

Let be these poppies that we strew,
Your roses are too red:
Let be these poppies, not for you
Cut down and spread."

Song

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet:
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

A Birthday

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot:
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;

Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

At Home

When I was dead, my spirit turned
To seek the much-frequented house.
I passed the door, and saw my friends
Feasting beneath green orange-boughs;
From hand to hand they pushed the wine,
They sucked the pulp of plum and peach;
They sang, they jested, and they laughed,
For each was loved of each.

I listened to their honest chat.
Said one: "To-morrow we shall be
Plod plod along the featureless sands,
And coasting miles and miles of sea.
Said one: "Before the turn of tide
We will achieve the eyrie-seat."
Said one: "To-morrow shall be like
To-day, but much more sweet."

"To-morrow," said they, strong with hope,
And dwelt upon the pleasant way:
"To-morrow," cried they one and all,
While no one spoke of yesterday.
Their life stood full at blessed noon;
I, only I, had passed away:
"To-morrow and to-day," they cried;
I was of yesterday.

I shivered comfortless, but cast
No chill across the tablecloth;
I all-forgotten shivered, sad
To stay and yet to part how loth:

I passed from the familiar room,
I who from love had passed away,
Like the remembrance of a guest
That tarrieth but a day.

Up-hill

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

Shut Out

The door was shut. I looked between
Its iron bars; and saw it lie,
My garden, mine, beneath the sky,
Pied with all flowers bedewed and green.

From bough to bough the song-birds crossed,
From flower to flower the moths and bees:
With all its nests and stately trees
It had been mine, and it was lost.

A shadowless spirit kept the gate,
Blank and unchanging like the grave.
I, peering through, said: "Let me have
Some buds to cheer my outcast state."

He answered not. "Or give me, then,
But one small twig from shrub or tree;
And bid my home remember me
Until I come to it again."

The spirit was silent; but he took
Mortar and stone to build a wall;
He left no loophole great or small
Through which my straining eyes might look.

So now I sit here quite alone,
Blinded with tears; nor grieve for that,
For nought is left worth looking at
Since my delightful land is gone.

A violet bed is budding near,
Wherein a lark has made her nest;
And good they are, but not the best;
And dear they are, but not so dear.

Echo

Come to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
As sunlight on a stream;
Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;
Where thirsting longing eyes
Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
My very life again though cold in death:
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:
Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

A Christmas Carol

In the bleak mid-winter
  Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
  Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
  Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
  Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
  Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
  When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
  A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
  Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim
  Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
  And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels
  Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
  Which adore.

Angels and archangels
  May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
  Thronged the air;
But only His mother
  In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
  With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
  Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
  I would bring a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man
  I would do my part,—
Yet what I can I give Him,
  Give my heart.

Passing Away

Passing away, saith the World, passing away:
Chances, beauty, and youth, sapped day by day:
Thy life never continueth in one stay.
Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair changing to grey
That hath won neither laurel nor bay?
I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May:
Thou, root-stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay
On my bosom for aye.
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my Soul, passing away:
With its burden of fear and hope, of labour and play,
Hearken what the past doth witness and say:
Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,
A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must decay.
At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one certain day
Lo the Bridegroom shall come and shall not delay;
Watch thou and pray.
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my God, passing away:
Winter passeth after the long delay:
New grapes on the vine, new figs on the tender spray,
Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven's May.
Though I tarry, wait for Me, trust Me, watch and pray:
Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day,
My love, My sister, My spouse, thou shalt hear Me say.
Then I answered: Yea.

GEORGE MEREDITH

[Born 1828, at Portsmouth; his grandfather and father were tailors (once prosperous) and his four aunts were among the beauties of the town. He completed his education at the Moravian school at Neuwied, where he learnt German thoroughly. For a time he was articled to a London solicitor, but soon turned to literature. Married in 1849 a daughter of Thomas Love Peacock, who left him nine years later and died in 1861: he married again in 1864. In 1855 he published *The Shaving of Shagpat,* in 1859 *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel;* but before this he had published a volume of *Poems* (1851)—a complete failure commercially, but now one of the rarest and costliest of modern books. Meredith's main work henceforth was novel-writing, but he did not really command a large public till 1885, with *Diana of the Crossways.* His chief volumes of Poetry were *Modern Love* (1862), *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth* (1883), *Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life* (1887), and *A Reading of Earth* (1888). He received the Order of Merit in 1905, and died four years later, a memorial service being held in Westminster Abbey.]

It is not likely that very much of George Meredith's poetry will ever be widely read. He is probably the most difficult of all our poets, as difficult habitually as Shakespeare and Shelley are occasionally. He seems to have been totally indifferent to the truth of that generally sound maxim with which Johnson rebuked the critics of Pope's *Homer:* "the purpose of a writer is to be read." It does not appear that he acted on any very clear distinction between poetry and prose, or even between prose and verse. The result is that his poetry often fails to satisfy perfectly legitimate and reasonable expectations.

People go to poetry for three things: for the delight with which it enraptures the ear, for its quickening and uplifting of the imagination, for the harvest of wisdom and truth to be reaped from its exhibition of the true life of nature and of man. From the greatest poetry they get all three at once. From Meredith, it must be sadly confessed, they get the first, the music of sound, very seldom: the second oftener, but far from always: the third almost always, though frequently presented in a manner and mood which belong rather to prose than to poetry. As to the first, it can only be said that Meredith, master of language as he was, was utterly defiant

of the limitations, without which poetry as an art could not be. He could write, when he chose, things as exquisite as *Love in the Valley* or those stanzas in *The Young Princess* which, whatever they owe to Tennyson, could only have been borrowed by a master of music:

"The soft night-wind went laden to death
With smell of the orange in flower;
The light leaves prattled to neighbour ears;
The bird of the passion sang over his tears:
The night named hour by hour.

Sang loud, sang low the rapturous bird
Till the yellow hour was nigh
Behind the folds of a darker cloud:
He chuckled, he sobbed, alow, aloud:
The voice between earth and sky."

But he more often chose to write in a kind of shorthand, neither poetry nor prose, which is often ugly and always obscure. What is to be said of such abominations of hideousness as:

"Love meet they who do not shove
Cravings in the van of Love,

or

"Melpomene among her livid people,
Ere stroke of lyre, upon Thaleia looks,"

or of such contortions of obscurity as:

"A woman who is wife despotic lords
Count faggot at the question, Shall she live:—

except, what Meredith himself said of Whitman, that the Muse would "fain have taught" poets who treat their art in this reckless and insolent fashion:

"what fruitful things and dear
Must sink beneath the tidewaves, of their weight,
If in no vessel built for sea they swim."

The truth is that Meredith never chose to accept the conditions of thought and language under which poetry works. Not only did he write many long poems such as *The Empty Purse* which consist almost entirely of abstract argument utterly alien to the simple and

sensuous nature of poetry; but even into his true poems he introduces, without any apparent consciousness of a false note, such phrases of pure prose as "the taint of personality" or "the brain's reflex." Everywhere his poetry suffers from an over-activity of the mere intellect, working almost by itself, and not as poetry demands, in alliance with the senses and the imagination.

Yet it is quite possible that the best of his poetry will outlast his novels. For, brilliant as the novels are, they would scarcely seem to have that assured serenity of beauty and truth which, far more than any such restless cleverness as theirs, is the mark of the novel made for immortality as we see it in *Don Quixote* and Goldsmith's *Vicar* and the immortal company of the Waverleys. No novels ever had so much brains come to their making as Meredith's; but the supreme work of art demands a harmony of qualities of which brains can only supply one. And however high we place the novels, poetry is still more than prose and—what is our present point—has commonly proved much the better stayer. That is not merely because its art is of a finer order. It is because, more even than the highest prose, it belongs to a world in which the contemporary is seen, as it were, from a height and in its true proportions. For this reason great poetry is of all time and is always modern. Even the Waverley Novels have in them far more matter which is now felt to be old-fashioned and to need explanation, than the contemporary poems of Wordsworth or Shelley. And so with Meredith; if a man really is a poet, his poetry, in spite of the exception of Scott, is generally the safest bottom in which he may embark for immortality. Clever as Meredith's poetry is, it is never so brilliant as *Diana* or *The Egoist*. But *Diana* and *The Egoist* belong much more decidedly to the Victorian age and much more doubtfully to posterity than *Love in the Valley* or *A Day of the Daughter of Hades*. There is not a line in these poems which our grandchildren will find worse than harsh or difficult. There are many pages in the novels which they will find out of date, odd, and perhaps a little ridiculous. And whatever his poetic faults, Meredith was a true poet. A poet is one in whose words man and nature seem to be alive with a life of which no prose has the secret, a life at once natural and transcendental, at once known and unknowable. So Meredith himself says:

> "strange
> When it strikes to within is the known:
> Richer than newness revealed."

We live in a world of wonder. Some of us have little power to see it; some have no will. But the poet has both, and both in the highest degree. No one will for a moment deny either the will or the power to Meredith. To him the face, both of earth and of man, has sacramental value; it truly is what it seems to be and yet is so much more: and the life of the spirit lies in learning what that "so much more" may mean to those who have eyes to see it. To feel it is to attain to the consciousness of what lifts man above the indifferent beasts of the field. "There," says Meredith, as he gazes on the Winter Heavens,

> "there, past mortal breath,
> Life glistens on the river of the death.
> It folds us, flesh and dust: and have we knelt,
> Or never knelt, or eyed as kine the springs
> Of radiance, yet the radiance enrings;
> And this is the soul's haven to have felt."

Into that haven Meredith's poetry, at its best, victoriously takes us. The glistening radiance of which he speaks is in all his finest poetry; and he makes us feel, as few poets do, both the manifold energies of earth, her fiery struggles, her everlasting movement, the beauty of her eternal interchange of death and birth, and the companion life of the body and spirit of man, responding to this kind but exacting and remorseless mother, living, working, loving, struggling ever upward into a life which more and more rejoices in realizing itself as a single link in a chain or ascending scale of timeless existence. If the multifold matter on which he lays his hand often fails to answer in music to the touch, yet little of it fails to answer in a new significance of life. History, myth, and the world of to-day all gain by his vivifying imagination. Few poets have created a more arresting vision of one of these mysterious incidents which are the turning-points of history than he in *The Nuptials of Attila*. There is not much political poetry which equals either in historical insight, or in imaginative power, the strangely neglected *Odes in Contribution to the Song of French History* which the poet himself valued as highly as any verse he had written. The second ode, that on Napoleon, contains perhaps the most penetrating analysis of his character ever written. The third, *France, December, 1870*, which we give here, has in it more of the prophetic spirit than any poetry written in England since Wordsworth or perhaps since Milton. And he shows the same power in his handling of

myth. The idea, and much of the execution, of *The Day of the Daughter of Hades* makes it one of the most beautiful adaptations of ancient legend to the uses of an ever-changing humanity which any language can boast. It assumes too much knowledge in the reader, no doubt, as *Phœbus with Admetus* also does; but in spite of crudities and obscurities both are true imaginative creations, and have played a real part in helping modern Englishmen to perceive the undying significance and beauty of Greek story. And of course the author of the novels could not but be even more at home in the world of his own day. What modern poet has given us a finer, more tragic, or truer contemporary drama than *Modern Love*, of which, by the way, the difficulty is generally much exaggerated? When once the key explaining "Madam" as the wife and the "Lady" as the other woman has been firmly grasped, a very few readings will make nearly all the sonnets fairly clear. And Tennyson was as incapable of the subtlety, humour, and understanding of the feminine point of view shown in the *Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt* as Meredith was incapable of producing the lyrics which are the imperishable glory of Tennyson's *Princess*.

Yet, fine as these and other strictly human poems are, in Meredith's poetry, unlike his novels, Nature is more than Man. Even in the novels Nature is no bad second. There are readers to whom their wit scarcely gives so much pleasure as their living and intimate knowledge of all the things that may be seen and heard by a man who likes being out of doors, has keen eyes, ears and brains, and makes the most of all of them. But this eager sympathy with birds and beasts and trees and clouds is even more omnipresent in the poems. Perhaps no English poet except Wordsworth and Tennyson brings back to a man who is fond of walking over the face of England so many of his keenest experiences, or prepares him for more and keener next time. No doubt Meredith is, in the Johnsonian phrase, "a tremendous companion." You cannot dream or doze with him, as you may with Keats, for instance. The "gentle doings" of Nature which Keats found softer than ring-dove's cooings are not much in Meredith's way. He seldom broods over his own thoughts, or sets us brooding over ours. What he does is to translate them into an energy of will and action—in a word, of life. What he finds in Nature and Man he makes into a kind of creed or philosophy of life. The two are for him, more than for most poets, one subject seen from two points of view: Earth, the mother of man; Man, the son who is instantly lost if he

attempts to forget or defy his mother. This is his central article of faith, and on it he builds a sort of doctrine or practical faith on which an excellent book has been written by Mr. George Trevelyan. It is a doctrine of courage, endurance, and strength, a facing of all facts, a refusing of all anodynes, a faith not in Heaven but in Earth, not in God but in Man. There is no rejection of a world of spirit: but in Meredith's view that world must be reached not by the denial of the body but by its healthy and disciplined affirmation, not by attempting to despise or escape Earth but by loving her, and walking in her ways with firm and faithful feet.

"Into the breast that gives the rose,
Shall I with shuddering fall?
Earth, the mother of all,
Moves on her stedfast way,
Gathering, flinging, sowing.
Mortals, we live in her day,
She in her children is growing.

She can lead us, only she,
Unto God's footstool, whither she reaches:
Loved, enjoyed, her gifts must be,
Reverenced the truths she teaches,
Ere a man may hope that he
Ever can attain the glee
Of things without a destiny!"

So he wrote in his early *Spirit of Earth in Autumn*, and the same doctrine is again and again repeated with slightly varied stress in poem after poem all through his life. No one will dispute its manliness, its note of health and sanity. But perhaps neither the poet himself nor Mr. Trevelyan fully realizes how lacking in tenderness, how short of healing power, it must at times appear to ordinary suffering, struggling, sinning men and women. Perhaps no man can explain his own faith. Perhaps the strength which he believes himself to receive from a doctrine, whether of heaven or of earth, which can be stated in words, commonly comes from some breath of spirit which refuses definition, and has no ancestry that can be set out in a genealogical tree. When Meredith puts his creed to the supreme test, as his wife lay dying, and gives us the result in that uplifting poem *A Faith on Trial*, it is better not

to ask too curiously whether, in actual fact, the consolation and strength which he seems to himself to derive from Earth and her wild cherry blossom have or can have any other ultimate origin than the spirit, divine or human, which has spoken through the noblest voices of Israel, Greece, Italy, and England. When in another fine poem, *In the Woods*, he declares that the "green earth" "gave me warnings of sin" and lessons "of good and evil at strife, And the struggle upward of all And my choice of the glory of Life," we need not ask how such teaching can possibly come of "Earth." It is enough that it comes; that the poet's spirit, and ours with his, is in Earth's presence quickened into a new and higher energy of life, strengthened to struggle and endure, delivered of self, set free to enjoy, made ready for acceptance and peace.

"Take up thy song from woods and fields
Whilst thou hast heart, and living yields
Delight: let that expire—
Let thy delight in living die,
Take thou thy song from star and sky,
And join the silent quire."

There we get his creed, purged of its harshness, passing out of intellectualism into music, into that musical reason which is poetry; which, because it is music, cannot be so definite and articulate as if it were mere words. But even in the harsher statements of his doctrine, such as *Earth and Man*, or *The Test of Manhood*, or *The Thrush in February*, poetry, if poetry be that which by the help of the imagination sets the spirit free, is always triumphing over the obstacles put in its way by an over-restless brain and an ear that heard discords without noticing them. Take the great conclusion of *The Thrush*, with its lovely closing simile: he is speaking of his beloved earth:—

"She, judged of shrinking nerves, appears
A Mother whom no cry can melt;
But read her past desires and fears,
The letters on her breast are spelt.

A slayer, yea, as when she pressed
Her savage to the slaughter-heaps,
To sacrifice she prompts her best:
She reaps them as the sower reaps.

But read her thought to speed the race,
And stars rush forth of blackest night:
You chill not at a cold embrace
To come, nor dread a dubious might.

. . . . . .

The sighting brain her good decree
Accepts; obeys those guides,[1] in faith,
By reason hourly fed, that she,
To some the clod, to some the wraith,

Is more, no mask; a flame, a stream.
Flame, stream, are we, in mid career
From torrent source, delirious dream,
To heaven-reflecting currents clear.

And why the sons of Strength have been
Her cherished offspring ever; how
The Spirit served by her is seen
Through Law; perusing love will show.

Love born of knowledge, love that gains
Vitality as Earth it mates,
The meaning of the Pleasures, Pains,
The Life, the Death, illuminates.

For love we Earth, then serve we all;
Her mystic secret then is ours:
We fall, or view our treasures fall,
Unclouded, as beholds her flowers

Earth, from a night of frosty wreck,
Enrobed in morning's mounted fire,
When lowly, with a broken neck,
The crocus lays her cheek to mire."

The crown of all is given in the strange, difficult, glorious *Hymn to Colour*, which is for Meredith a single name for the material splendours of Earth and Heaven and the spiritual glories of human Love. With that key men will "come out of brutishness," becoming gods without ceasing, or wishing to cease, to be animals.

[1] i. e. Pain and Pleasure mentioned in the omitted stanzas.

"More gardens will they win than any lost;
The vile plucked out of them, the unlovely slain.
Not forfeiting the beast with which they are crossed,
To stature of the Gods will they attain.
They shall uplift their Earth to meet her Lord,
Themselves the attuning chord!"

Poetry has, perhaps, to-day a greater work to do than ever before; and never a better chance of doing it. Each poet can only do it in his own way. He gets the gain and pays the penalty of that way being what it is, which is another way of saying of being himself. Here is Meredith's way: what he wrote is what he was. His way is not easy walking. The right and happy thing when we read poetry is to be so caught up into the poet's being, so absorbed in him, that for the time we spontaneously see with his eyes, think his thoughts, speak his words. With no poet is that more difficult than with Meredith. Yet, if and so far as we attain to it, we get a new vision of Earth and of Man from one who had looked on both with an eye of rarest keenness, penetration, and love. Truth and Beauty gain for us a fuller meaning. We perceive more, love more, live more. For the life Meredith gives is the life in which, more than all but a very few men, he believed: a life which meant knowing as well as loving, loving as well as knowing.

JOHN BAILEY.

THE SPIRIT OF SHAKESPEARE [1]

I

Thy greatest knew thee, Mother Earth; unsoured
He knew thy sons. He probed from hell to hell
Of human passions, but of love deflowered
His wisdom was not, for he knew thee well.
Thence came the honeyed corner at his lips,
The conquering smile wherein his spirit sails
Calm as the God who the white sea-wave whips,
Yet full of speech and intershifting tales,
Close mirrors of us: thence had he the laugh
We feel is thine: broad as ten thousand beeves
At pasture! thence thy songs, that winnow chaff
From grain, bid sick Philosophy's last leaves
Whirl, if they have no response—they enforced
To fatten Earth when from her soul divorced.

[1] These poems are reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, from the volumes of Mr. Meredith's collected poems, copyrighted, 1897, 1898, by George Meredith, 1912 by Charles Scribner's Sons.

II

How smiles he at a generation ranked
In gloomy noddings over life! They pass.
Not he to feed upon a breast unthanked,
Or eye a beauteous face in a cracked glass.
But he can spy that little twist of brain
Which moved some weighty leader of the blind,
Unwitting 'twas the goad of personal pain,
To view in curst eclipse our Mother's mind,
And show us of some rigid harridan
The wretched bondmen till the end of time.
O lived the Master now to paint us Man,
That little twist of brain would ring a chime
Of whence it came and what it caused, to start
Thunders of laughter, clearing air and heart.

Winter Heavens

Sharp is the night, but stars with frost alive
Leap off the rim of earth across the dome.
It is a night to make the heavens our home
More than the nest whereto apace we strive.
Lengths down our road each fir-tree seems a hive,
In swarms outrushing from the golden comb.
They waken waves of thoughts that burst to foam:
The living throb in me, the dead revive.
Yon mantle clothes us; there, past mortal breath,
Life glistens on the river of the death.
It folds us, flesh and dust; and have we knelt,
Or never knelt, or eyed as kine the springs
Of radiance, the radiance enrings:
And this is the soul's haven to have felt.

Dirge in Woods

A wind sways the pines,
And below
Not a breath of wild air;
Still as the mosses that glow
On the flooring and over the lines

Of the roots here and there.
The pine-tree drops its dead;
They are quiet, as under the sea.
Overhead, overhead
Rushes life in a race,
As the clouds the clouds chase;
And we go,
And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
Even we,
Even so.

The Year's Sheddings

The varied colours are a fitful heap:
They pass in constant service though they sleep;
The self gone out of them, therewith the pain:
Read that, who still to spell our earth remain.

Song in the Songless

They have no song, the sedges dry,
And still they sing.
It is within my breast they sing,
As I pass by.
Within my breast they touch a string,
They wake a sigh.
There is but sound of sedges dry;
In me they sing.

Youth in Age

Once I was part of the music I heard
On the boughs or sweet between earth and sky,
For joy of the beating of wings on high
My heart shot into the breast of the bird.

I hear it now and I see it fly,
And a life in wrinkles again is stirred,
My heart shoots into the breast of the bird,
As it will for sheer love still the last long sigh.

France, December, 1870

I

We look for her that sunlike stood
Upon the forehead of our day,
An orb of nations, radiating food
For body and for mind alway.
Where is the Shape of glad array;
The nervous hands, the front of steel,
The clarion tongue? Where is the bold proud face?
We see a vacant place;
We hear an iron heel.

II

O she that made the brave appeal
For manhood when our time was dark,
And from our fetters drove the spark
Which was as lightning to reveal
New seasons, with the swifter play
Of pulses, and benigner day;
She that divinely shook the dead
From living man; that stretched ahead
Her resolute forefinger straight,
And marched toward the gloomy gate
Of earth's Untried, gave note, and in
The good name of Humanity
Called forth the daring vision! she,
She likewise half corrupt of sin,
Angel and Wanton! can it be?
Her star has foundered in eclipse,
The shriek of madness on her lips;
Shreds of her, and no more, we see.
There is horrible convulsion, smothered din,
As of one that in a grave-cloth struggles to be free.

III

Look not for spreading boughs
On the riven forest tree.
Look down where deep in blood and mire
Black thunder plants his feet and ploughs

The soil for ruin: that is France:
Still thrilling like a lyre,
Amazed to shivering discord from a fall
Sudden as that the lurid hosts recall
Who met in heaven the irreparable mischance.
O that is France!
The brilliant eyes to kindle bliss,
The shrewd quick lips to laugh and kiss,
Breasts that a sighing world inspire,
And laughter-dimpled countenance
Where soul and senses caught desire!

IV

Ever invoking fire from heaven, the fire
Has grasped her, unconsumeable, but framed
For all the ecstasies of suffering dire.
Mother of Pride, her sanctuary shamed:
Mother of Delicacy, and made a mark
For outrage: Mother of Luxury, stripped stark:
Mother of Heroes, bondsmen: thro' the rains,
Across her boundaries, lo the league-long chains!
Fond Mother of her martial youth; they pass,
Are spectres in her sight, are mown as grass!
Mother of Honour, and dishonoured: Mother
Of Glory, she condemned to crown with bays
Her victor, and be fountain of his praise.
Is there another curse? There is another:
Compassionate her madness: is she not
Mother of Reason? she that sees them mown
Like grass, her young ones! Yea, in the low groan
And under the fixed thunder of this hour
Which holds the animate world in one foul blot
Tranced circumambient while relentless Power
Beaks at her heart and claws her limbs down-thrown,
She, with the plunging lightnings overshot,
With madness for an armour against pain,
With milkless breasts for little ones athirst,
And round her all her noblest dying in vain,
Mother of Reason is she, trebly cursed,
To feel, to see, to justify the blow;

Chamber to chamber of her sequent brain
Gives answer of the cause of her great woe,
Inexorably echoing thro' the vaults,
"'Tis thus they reap in blood, in blood who sow:
"This is the sum of self-absolvëd faults."
Doubt not that thro' her grief, with sight supreme,
Thro' her delirium and despair's last dream,
Thro' pride, thro' bright illusion and the brood
Bewildering of her various Motherhood,
The high strong light within her, tho' she bleeds,
Traces the letters of returned misdeeds.
She sees what seed long sown, ripened of late,
Bears this fierce crop; and she discerns her fate
From origin to agony, and on
As far as the wave washes long and wan
Off one disastrous impulse: for of waves
Our life is, and our deeds are pregnant graves
Blown rolling to the sunset from the dawn.

V

Ah, what a dawn of splendour, when her sowers
Went forth and bent the necks of populations,
And of their terrors and humiliations
Wove her the starry wreath that earthward lowers
Now in the figure of a burning yoke!
Her legions traversed North and South and East,
Of triumph they enjoyed the glutton's feast:
They grafted the green sprig, they lopped the oak.
They caught by the beard the tempests, by the scalp
The icy precipices, and clove sheer through
The heart of horror of the pinnacled Alp,
Emerging not as men whom mortals knew.
They were the earthquake and the hurricane,
The lightnings and the locusts, plagues of blight,
Plagues of the revel: they were Deluge rain,
And dreaded Conflagration; lawless Might.
Death writes a reeling line along the snows;
Where under frozen mists they may be tracked,
Who men and elements provoked to foes,
And Gods: they were of God and Beast compact:

Abhorred of all. Yet, how they sucked the teats
Of Carnage, thirsty issue of their dam,
Whose eagles, angrier than their oriflamme,
Flushed the vext earth with blood, green earth forgets.
The gay young generations mask her grief;
Where bled her children hangs the loaded sheaf.
Forgetful is green earth; the Gods alone
Remember everlastingly: they strike
Remorselessly, and ever like for like.
By their great memories the Gods are known.

VI

They are with her now, and in her ears, and known.
'Tis they that cast her to the dust for Strength,
Their slave, to feed on her fair body's length,
That once the sweetest and the proudest shone;
Scoring for hideous dismemberment
Her limbs, as were the anguish-taking breath
Gone out of her in the insufferable descent
From her high chieftainship; as were she death,
Who hears a voice of justice, feels the knife
Of torture, drinks all ignominy of life.
They are with her, and the painful Gods might weep,
If ever rain of tears came out of heaven
To flatter Weakness and bid Conscience sleep,
Viewing the woe of this Immortal, driven
For the soul's life to drain the maddening cup
Of her own children's blood implacably:
Unsparing even as they to furrow up
The yellow land to likeness of a sea:
The bountiful fair land of vine and grain,
Of wit and grace and ardour, and strong roots,
Fruits perishable, imperishable fruits;
Furrowed to likeness of the dim grey main
Behind the black obliterating cyclone.

VII

Behold, the Gods are with her, and are known.
Whom they abandon misery persecutes
No more: them half-eyed apathy may loan

The happiness of pitiable brutes.
Whom the just Gods abandon have no light,
No ruthless light of introspective eyes
That in the midst of misery scrutinize
The heart and its iniquities outright.
They rest, they smile and rest; have earned perchance
Of ancient service quiet for a term;
Quiet of old men dropping to the worm;
And so goes out the soul. But not of France.
She cries for grief, and to the Gods she cries,
For fearfully their loosened hands chastize,
And icily they watch the rod's caress
Ravage her flesh from scourges merciless,
But she, inveterate of brain, discerns
That Pity has as little place as Joy
Among their roll of gifts; for Strength she yearns,
For Strength, her idol once, too long her toy.
Lo, Strength is of the plain root-Virtues born:
Strength shall ye gain by service, prove in scorn,
Train by endurance, by devotion shape.
Strength is not won by miracle or rape.
It is the offspring of the modest years,
The gift of sire to son, thro' those firm laws
Which we name Gods; which are the righteous cause,
The cause of man, and manhood's ministers.
Could France accept the fables of her priests,
Who blest her banners in this game of beasts,
And now bid hope that heaven will intercede
To violate its laws in her sore need,
She would find comfort in their opiates:
Mother of Reason! can she cheat the Fates?
Would she, the champion of the open mind,
The Omnipotent's prime gift—the gift of growth—
Consent even for a night-time to be blind,
And sink her soul on the delusive sloth,
For fruits ethereal and material, both,
In peril of her place among mankind?
The Mother of the many Laughters might
Call one poor shade of laughter in the light
Of her unwavering lamp to mark what things
The world puts faith in, careless of the truth:

What silly puppet-bodies danced on strings,
Attached by credence, we appear in sooth,
Demanding intercession, direct aid,
When the whole tragic tale hangs on a broken blade!

She swung the sword for centuries; in a day
It slipped her, like a stream cut off from source.
She struck a feeble hand, and tried to pray,
Clamoured of treachery, and had recourse
To drunken outcries in her dream that Force
Needed but hear her shouting to obey.
Was she not formed to conquer? The bright plumes
Of crested vanity shed graceful nods:
Transcendent in her foundries, Arts and looms,
Had France to fear the vengeance of the Gods?
Her faith was on her battle-roll of names
Sheathed in the records of old war; with dance
And song she thrilled her warriors and her dames,
Embracing her Dishonourer: gave him France
From head to foot, France present and to come,
So she might hear the trumpet and the drum—
Bellona and Bacchante! rushing forth
On yon stout marching Schoolmen of the North.

Inveterate of brain, well knows she why
Strength failed her, faithful to himself the first:
Her dream is done, and she can read the sky,
And she can take into her heart the worst
Calamity to drug the shameful thought
Of days that made her as the man she served,
A name of terror, but a thing unnerved:
Buying the trickster, by the trickster bought,
She for dominion, he to patch a throne.

VIII

Henceforth of her the Gods are known,
Open to them her breast is laid.
Inveterate of brain, heart-valiant,
Never did fairer creature pant
Before the altar and the blade!

IX

Swift fall the blows, and men upbraid,
And friends give echo blunt and cold,
The echo of the forest to the axe.
Within her are the fires that wax
For resurrection from the mould.

X

She snatched at heaven's flame of old,
And kindled nations: she was weak:
Frail sister of her heroic prototype,
The Man; for sacrifice unripe,
She too must fill a Vulture's beak.
Deride the vanquished, and acclaim
The conqueror, who stains her fame,
Still the Gods love her, for that of high aim
Is this good France, the bleeding thing they stripe.

XI

She shall rise worthier of her prototype
Thro' her abasement deep; the pain that runs
From nerve to nerve some victory achieves.
They lie like circle-strewn soaked Autumn-leaves
Which stain the forest scarlet, her fair sons!
And of their death her life is: of their blood
From many streams now urging to a flood,
No more divided, France shall rise afresh.
Of them she learns the lesson of the flesh:—
The lesson writ in red since first Time ran,
A hunter hunting down the beast in man:
That till the chasing out of its last vice,
The flesh was fashioned but for sacrifice.

Immortal Mother of a mortal host!
Thou suffering of the wounds that will not slay,
Wounds that bring death but take not life away!—
Stand fast and hearken while thy victors boast:
Hearken, and loathe that music evermore.
Slip loose thy garments woven of pride and shame:
The torture lurks in them, with them the blame

Shall pass to leave thee purer than before.
Undo thy jewels, thinking whence they came,
For what, and of the abominable name
Of her who in imperial beauty wore.

O Mother of a fated fleeting host
Conceived in the past days of sin, and born
Heirs of disease and arrogance and scorn,
Surrender, yield the weight of thy great ghost,
Like wings on air, to what the heavens proclaim
With trumpets from the multitudinous mounds
Where peace has filled the hearing of thy sons:
Albeit a pang of dissolution rounds
Each new discernment of the undying ones,
Do thou stoop to these graves here scattered wide
Along thy fields, as sunless billows roll;
These ashes have the lesson for the soul.
"Die to thy Vanity, and strain thy Pride,
Strip off thy Luxury: that thou may'st live,
Die to thyself," they say, "as we have died
From dear existence, and the foe forgive,
Nor pray for aught save in our little space
To warm good seed to greet the fair earth's face."
O Mother! take their counsel, and so shall
The broader world breathe in on this thy home,
Light clear for thee the counter-changing dome,
Strength give thee, like an ocean's vast expanse
Off mountain cliffs, the generations all,
Not whirling in their narrow rings of foam,
But as a river forward. Soaring France!
Now is Humanity on trial in thee:
Now may'st thou gather humankind in fee:
Now prove that Reason is a quenchless scroll;
Make of calamity thine aureole,
And bleeding lead us thro' the troubles of the sea.

THE EARL OF LYTTON

[Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton, first Earl of Lytton, son of the well-known Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, first Baron. Born 1834; educated at Harrow and Bonn; married 1864 Edith, eldest daughter of the Hon. Edward Villiers; died suddenly in Paris, 1891. From 1862 onwards he held many diplomatic appointments; was Viceroy of India 1876, and Ambassador in Paris from 1887 till his death. Published in 1855 *Clytemnestra and other Poems* (this and some other volumes under the name "Owen Meredith"); 1857, *The Wanderer;* at intervals, *Lucile*, *Fables in Song*, *King Poppy*, and in 1885 *Glenaveril*, in two volumes.]

The first Earl of Lytton is an example of a combination rare in modern times—that of the politician, diplomatist, and administrator with the poet and man of letters. Such combinations were common three centuries ago, but in our day union of such different functions is apt to make people sceptical as to a man's fitness for either. So, as Lord Lytton's daughter, Lady Betty Balfour, points out in her introduction to a selection from his poems, when he was made Viceroy of India some critics doubted whether a poet could govern, and others doubted whether a ruler could be a good poet. We are not here called upon to declare for or against his success as administrator and ambassador; our concern is with his poetry alone. It is true, however, as his daughter remarks, that the circumstances of his career were in some respects against him as a poet. It is not easy for an exile to keep in touch with his home audience; if he is a man of books, books come more and more to be his substitute for the realities of life, as they, and meditation upon them, certainly did in Lord Lytton's case. Hence his later poems, and especially the too long *Glenaveril*, had far less success than those volumes which "Owen Meredith" had published twenty or thirty years before. But faulty as they were, these later works contained many memorable lines, and they were, what the early works had not always been, original.

Here we touch upon the objection which used to be commonly laid against the volumes previous to *Fables in Song*. Mrs. Browning, in a letter to the author, wrote, "You *sympathise* too much";

meaning thereby that he thought and wrote as others had done before him. Indeed, he depended too largely in these days upon George Sand, Victor Hugo, Browning, and many others; and what shall we say of a modern poet who could borrow the best-known line of Marlowe and make Aegisthus cry out to Clytemnestra,

"Make me immortal with one costly kiss"?

But this fault he soon outgrew, and all the poems of middle and later life are free from it.

Had our space permitted, we should have included in our selection a poem which throws a rather sad light upon the poet-statesman's view of the two careers between which his life had been divided. This poem, *The Prisoner of Provence*, is an adaptation of the story of *The Man in the Iron Mask* to Lord Lytton's own case; and, written as it was a few weeks before his death, it seems to show that he valued the outward glory of State positions as but little in comparison with what had been denied him—acceptance as a distinguished poet at the hands of the experts first, and afterwards of the reading public throughout the empire.

EDITOR.

[From *The Wanderer*]

THE PORTRAIT

I

Midnight past! Not a sound of aught
Thro' the silent house, but the wind at his prayers.
I sat by the dying fire, and thought
Of the dear dead woman upstairs.

II

A night of tears! for the gusty rain
Had ceased, but the eaves dripping yet;
And the moon look'd forth, as tho' in pain,
With her face all white and wet:

III

Nobody with me, my watch to keep,
But the friend of my bosom, the man I love:
And grief had sent him fast to sleep
In the chamber up above.

IV

Nobody else, in the country place
All round, that knew of my loss beside,
But the good young Priest with the Raphael-face
Who confess'd her when she died.

V

That good young Priest is of gentle nerve,
And my grief had moved him beyond control;
For his lip grew white, as I could observe,
When he speeded her parting soul.

VI

I sat by the dreary hearth alone:
I thought of the pleasant days of yore:
I said "the staff of my life is gone:
The woman I love is no more.

VII

"Gem-clasped on her bosom my portrait lies,
Which next to her heart she used to wear—
It is steeped in the light of her loving eyes,
And the sweets of her bosom and hair."

VIII

And I said—"the thing is precious to me:
They will bury her soon in the churchyard clay:
It lies on her heart, and lost must be,
If I do not take it away."

IX

I lighted my lamp at the dying flame,
And crept up the stairs that creak'd for fright,
Till into the chamber of death I came,
Where she lay all in white.

X

The moon shone over her winding sheet.
There, stark she lay on her carven bed:
Seven burning tapers about her feet,
And seven about her head.

XI

As I stretch'd my hand, I held my breath;
I turn'd, as I drew the curtains apart:
I dared not look on the face of death:
I knew where to find her heart.

XII

I thought, at first, as my touch fell there,
It had warm'd that heart to life, with love;
For the thing I touch'd was warm, I swear,
And I could feel it move.

XIII

'Twas the hand of a man, that was moving slow
O'er the heart of the dead,—from the other side;
And at once the sweat broke over my brow,
"Who is robbing the corpse?" I cried.

XIV

Opposite me, by the tapers' light,
The friend of my bosom, the man I loved,
Stood over the corpse, and all as white,
And neither of us moved.

XV

"What do you here, my friend?" . . . The man
Look'd first at me, and then at the dead.
"There is a portrait here . . ." he began;
"There is. It is mine," I said.

XVI

Said the friend of my bosom, "Yours, no doubt,
The portrait was, till a month ago,
When this suffering angel took that out,
And placed mine there, I know."

XVII

"This woman, she loved me well," said I.
"A month ago," said my friend to me:
"And in your throat," I groan'd, "you lie!"
He answer'd . . . "Let us see."

XVIII

"Enough!" I return'd, "let the dead decide:
And whose-soever the portrait prove,
His shall it be, when the cause is tried,
Where Death is arraign'd by Love."

XIX

We found the portrait, there in its place:
We open'd it by the tapers' shine:
The gems were all unchanged: the face
Was—neither his nor mine.

XX

"One nail drives out another, at least!
The portrait is not ours," I cried,
"But our friend's, the Raphael-faced young Priest,
Who confess'd her when she died."

Spring and Winter

I

Was it well in him, if he
Felt not love, to speak of love so?
If he still unmoved must be,
Was it nobly sought to move so?
Pluck the flower, but not to wear it—
Spurn it from him, yet not spare it?

II

Need he say that I was fair,
With such meaning in his tone,
Adding ever that her hair
Had the same tinge as my own?
Pluck my life up, root and bloom,
To make garlands for her tomb!

III

And, her cheek, he said, tho' bright.
Lack'd the lucid blush divine
Of that rose each whisper light
Of his praises waked in mine;
But 'twas just that he loved then
More than he can love again.

IV

Then, if beauty could not bind him,
Wherefore praise me, speaking low?
Use my face just to remind him
How no face could please him now?
Why, if loving could not move him,
Did he teach me still to love him?

V

"Yes!" he said, "he had grown wise now:
He had suffer'd much of yore:
But a fair face, to his eyes now,
Was a fair face, and no more.
Yet the anguish and the bliss,
And the dream too, had been his."

VI

Ah, those words a thought too tender
For the commonplaces spoken!
Looks whose meaning seem'd to render
Help to words when speech came broken!
Why so late in July moonlight
Just to say what 's said by noonlight?

VII

And why praise my youth for gladness,
Keeping something in his smile
That changed all my youth to sadness,
He still smiling all the while?
Since, when so my youth was over,
He said "Seek some younger lover!"

VIII

Well, the Spring 's back now! the thrushes
  Are astir as heretofore,
And the apple-blossom blushes
  As of old about the door.
Doth he taste a finer bliss,
I must wonder, in all this,

IX

(Winning thus what I have lost)
  By the usage of my youth?
I can feel my forehead crost
  By the wrinkle's fretful tooth,
While the grey grows in my hair,
And the cold creeps everywhere.

Athens

(1865)

[From *After Paradise*]

The burnt-out heart of Hellas here behold!
  Quench'd fire-pit of the quick explosive Past,
Thought's highest crater—all its fervours cold,
    Ashes and dust at last!

And what Hellenic light is living now
  To gild, not Greece, but other lands, is given:
Not where the splendour sank, the after-glow
    Of sunset stays in heaven.

But loud o'er Grecian ruins still the lark
  Doth, as of old, Hyperion's glory hail,
And from Hymettus, in the moonlight, hark
    The exuberant nightingale!

ANDROMEDA

I

The monster that with menace guarded thee
Rock-bound, unhappy one, at last is slain;
And thy long-prisoned loveliness set free
From the chill torment of its cruel chain.
For what, then, do those wistful gazes wait?
And why art thou still lingering there alone,
In fruitless freedom, so disconsolate?
Perseus is gone!

II

Heroic men, 'tis yours to dare and do.
Heroic women, yours the harder lot,
To wait and suffer. The years come and go.
Deliverance tarries. You can seek it not.
And if, when come at last, it comes too late?
Forlorn Andromeda, thy chains undone
Have freed thy life for what uncertain fate?
Perseus is gone!

WILLIAM MORRIS

[WILLIAM MORRIS was born at Elm House, Walthamstow, in 1834, went to school at Marlborough, and proceeded from it to Exeter College, Oxford. On taking his degree he became an articled pupil of G. E. Street, the architect, but quitted his office before long in order to devote himself to painting, designing, and decoration, as well as to poetry. His first published poems appeared in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, founded and carried on by him and a group of his friends, in 1856; and, his first published volume, *The Defence of Guenevere, and other Poems*, in 1858. For some years afterwards he was chiefly occupied with the work which developed round the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. (afterwards Morris & Co.), manufacturers and decorators. In 1865 he returned to London from the house he had built and furnished for himself in Kent, and resumed the writing of poetry. *The Life and Death of Jason* appeared in 1867, and *The Earthly Paradise* in 1868–1870. During these years he had learned Icelandic, and translated a number of the Sagas. In 1871 he became tenant of Kelmscott Manor House, Lechlade, which remained his country home for the rest of his life, though he chiefly lived and worked in London. *Love is Enough* was published in 1872 and *Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs* in 1876. In 1877 he declined to accept nomination for the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford; about this time his political activity began, at first as an advanced Radical, gradually developing into the active Socialism of his later years. On January 13, 1883, he was elected an Honorary Fellow of Exeter and enrolled himself as a member of the Social Democratic Federation. From that time forward the chief among his multifarious occupations were, designing for and carrying on the business of his firm, organizing and working on behalf of the Socialist movement, lecturing and writing on art and social questions, writing prose romances, and carrying on the work of the famous Kelmscott Press, started by him in 1891. In this last year he brought out, as the second volume printed at that press, a selection of his own unpublished poems under the title of *Poems by the Way*. Among his poetical works should also be mentioned his verse translations of Virgil's *Aeneid* (1875) and Homer's *Odyssey* (1887). He died at Kelmscott House, Hammersmith, in October, 1896.]

Of all the great English poets, William Morris is the one whom it is least possible to consider or to appreciate as a poet alone. To him, poetry was not an isolated art. It was the application to the material of rhythmical language of the constructive and decorative principles common to all arts. And art itself—of which all the particular arts were the applications to one or another material—was not an isolated thing. It was simply the visible or audible recorded expression of the joy of life, "production," as Aristotle had defined it long before, "with pleasure and for the sake of pleasure." His well-known sayings that "talk of inspiration is sheer nonsense, it is a mere matter of craftsmanship," and that, in terms still more concrete and vivid, "if a chap can't compose an epic while he 's weaving tapestry, he had better shut up," express his considered doctrine, and also his consistent practice. He handled the art of poetry as he handled the arts of weaving or dyeing or printing, the production of household furniture or wall-decoration; all were pleasurable production meant for pleasurable use. Hence while it remains true that his poetry, like that of others, has to be estimated simply as poetry, it will convey its full meaning only to those who realize what he meant it to be, what place he meant it to occupy in a scheme of human life. It would be beside the point here to enlarge on the manifold scope of his activities, or on the influence which in many ways they exercised, and still exercise, on civilization. But neither must this be forgotten; for otherwise we should, by treating his poetry as a detached thing, miss its structural import and part of its individual quality. That he came to be known as "the author of *The Earthly Paradise*" is more than a happy accident. For the creation of an earthly paradise in a perfectly literal sense of the words, of an actual world in which beauty and joy should be incorporated with daily life and be of the essence of all productive activity, was the object which he pursued throughout; and his own divergent activities were all threaded from that one centre.

This way of regarding and handling poetry began in him as an instinct, and gradually wrought itself out into a settled doctrine. In his earlier poetry it is only latent. His first volume represents the last outcome of the Romantic movement, and its linking up with the mediæval tradition through a new imaginative insight into history. It had been foreshadowed by Keats in poems like the *Eve of St. Mark* and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, and was intimately connected with the Pre-Raphaelite movement and the potent in-

fluence, alike in poetry and painting, of Rossetti. *The Defence of Guenevere,* like the *Lyrical Ballads* of sixty years before, attracted little immediate attention, but, like them, was a germinal force of incalculable vitality. Technically the poems in this volume are uncertain in handling, immature, full of the crude sap of youth. But they were the symbol of the new era and the manifestation of a new poet. "Where," in Swinburne's just words, "among other and older poets of his time and country, is one comparable for perception and experience of tragic truth, of subtle and noble, terrible and piteous things? where a touch of passion at once so broad and so sure?" The chord of imaginative beauty sounded by three typical pieces, *King Arthur's Tomb, The Haystack in the Floods, Summer Dawn,* is something which stands by itself and alone. Arthurian romance and the early Middle Ages, Chaucer and Froissart and the full expansion of the fourteenth century, are recaptured and brought into vital connexion with the beauty and wonder of the actual world as these took shape in a fresh and wholly original and underivative imagination. Perhaps now, after sixty more years have passed, these poems appeal to new minds with even enhanced poignancy. They have never been widely popular; the fashion they set, the school they formed, are negligible. Their effect has been over poetry itself, in a way at once more intimate and more profound.

To this early germinal period of romantic exploration succeeded, after an interval of nearly ten years, the middle period of trained and deliberate craftsmanship. This is represented by the *Life and Death of Jason* and *The Earthly Paradise.* English poetry in the early sixties had come to a point of uncertainty and partial stagnation. Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* (1864), Morris's *Jason* (1867), and Rossetti's *Poems* (1870) mark the emergence of fresh forces which poured new life into it and gave it a fresh orientation. All three won immediate and wide recognition.

In *Jason,* the Chaucerian element in the mixed impulse of Morris's earlier volume becomes predominant. Here he developed his full gift as a story-teller, a gift rare among poets, and absent or inconspicuous in many of the greatest. Constructional power, sense of design, and the application to design of rich continuous ornament had now all been mastered. The long narrative-poem—a form in which English poetry had but little of the first rank to show, and which had succumbed to the idyllic treatment of episodes—was reinstated. But in *Jason* Morris also re-established

that connexion with the Middle Ages which had been broken by the Elizabethans and since then, in the main, lost. Its whole atmosphere is mediaeval, in the sense of its resuming the mediaeval structure and colour, and applying them to a classical story.

> "—Rede haue I
> Of Gawen and Sir Guy,
> And tell can a great pece
> Of the Golden Flece,
> How Jason it wan
> Lyke a valyaunt man."

Yet it is essentially new and modern; the synthesis of the classical and the romantic past is vitalized by an original genius, in advance of rather than behind its own age. It likewise reinstated the ten-syllabled rhyming couplet—to all intents and purposes Chaucer's invention—in its old flexibility and fluency. Keats in *Lamia*, Shelley in *Epipsychidion*—to some degree, in an odd way of his own, Browning also in *Sordello*—had made tentative approaches to this; but its accomplishment was effected by Morris alone; nor, though he has had many imitators, did he transmit the secret to any successor.

In *The Earthly Paradise* this vital synthesis was carried farther. Few, perhaps, of its readers go beyond reading it as a mere series of stories; and in these they find a certain sameness, some languor of movement, even a cloying repetition of ornament. But the twenty-five stories were designed, and should be thought of, as large decorative panels in a single design, to which the setting gives at once the clue and the justification. That whole design is so huge in scale—some 42,000 lines in all—and so intricate as well as skilful in its construction, that it does not arrest notice when one is in close contact with it. Like one of those French Gothic cathedrals which Morris ranked among the highest products of human genius, the whole is partly ignored, partly taken for granted, by those who fix their attention on successive details. The subordination of the parts to the whole, the calculated repetitions as of arch and column and window, are only appreciated when we realize that they are exactly what the artist meant. The principle of "sheer craftsmanship" in poetry is here carried to its full stretch. The stories unroll themselves fluently and equably over large spaces in which the poetry is deliberately diffused and not concentrated. The pattern is large, and consists largely of background, in which

the detail is treated accordingly. It even passes sometimes into what corresponds to a diapered pattern. The rose-garden or apple-orchard, the "brown bird" which recurs in *The Earthly Paradise* almost to satiety, are a considered convention for narrative ornament. For this reason, extracts or specimens give little idea of the whole structure. It is a sort of work that does not lend itself to detached quotation; it has few purple patches, few memorable single lines. Such there are, but they are mostly to be found in the more highly-wrought interludes of the setting, or in the interposed lyrics through which the large equable flow of the narrative is gathered up, as it were, to a greater tension. One result is a certain sense of superflux, even of monotony; another is that Morris never, as very good poets often do, "preaches over his liquor."

In *The Earthly Paradise* the reconquest of Chaucer's ten-syllabled couplet already effected in *Jason* is accompanied by a similar reconquest of the other two Chaucerian narrative-metres, the eight-syllabled couplet and the rhyme-royal. All three are handled on a large scale, and with complete success. In these forms, Morris felt that he had now done what he could do; and he set himself to fresh explorations farther afield. The "morality" of *Love is Enough*, which was the first important result of these new experiments, is probably the least popular of his larger works, as it is the most difficult; and it must be added that the labour shows in it, as well as the result of the labour. He was here trying to revive and readapt not only an obsolete dramatic form, but a rhythmical structure to which Chaucer himself had given the death-blow. The native English verse based on stress and alliteration had been decisively displaced by the rhyming syllabic metres of France. But it has always subsisted under the surface, and in the hands of an experimenter of native English genius is almost bound to reappear. To this experiment Morris applied great skill and patience. But it suffers from being too obviously experimental, and too elaborate in its constructional artifice. This, as in some of his latest and possibly finest designs in decorated fabrics (the "chintzes" which for many years drew, from critics as superficial as they were supercilious, sneers at a "poet-upholsterer"), is carried a little farther than can make effective appeal to any one but an expert craftsman. For such, *Love is Enough* will always be a work of extreme interest and suggestiveness. But that is not, according to Morris's own doctrine, or indeed according to any tenable conception, the real function of poetry.

In *Sigurd the Volsung*, not long afterwards, he broke fresh ground alike in subject and in treatment. It is his last large work in poetry, and though it was not, and is not, the most popular, it is probably, and certainly was in his own judgment, the greatest, In it he passed from romance, to which, with one notable exception, his previous work belongs, to the amplitude, height, and tension of epic. The effect on him of the Icelandic Sagas, as soon as he came to know them, was immense and in some sense revolutionary. It transformed the romantic dream-world, a decoration hung, as it were, for joy and solace on the background of life, into an actual world more wonderful in its vastness and tragic issues than any world of imaginary beauty. The "earthly paradise" has taken a new meaning. The song of the Hesperides in *Jason* had incarnated the romantic spirit in the lines:

> "Let earth and heaven go on their way
> While still we watch from day to day,
> In this green place left all alone,
> A remnant of the days long gone."

And in the introductory verses to *The Earthly Paradise* he speaks of himself as striving "to build a shadowy isle of bliss" with "idle verses." The world of the epic is neither shadowy nor idle.

This transforming influence first shows itself in the *Earthly Paradise* itself. *The Lovers of Gudrun* is in a wholly different key from the rest of the stories. A close rendering, in its substance, of the prose Laxdæla-saga, it has a new poetic vitality and nobility: it is the central point of Morris's poetry. The expansion of this movement in *Sigurd* took the form of a fresh epic rendering of the Völsunga-saga, the story of the North which stands alongside of the story of Troy as one of the two great epic subjects of the world. For the reshaping of this story Morris adopted a metrical form which until then had only been used in English on a small scale, the six-beat rhymed couplet, in long lines with free syncopation, and a marked caesura or break of rhythm in the middle of each line. It corresponds, in his handling, more nearly than any other English measure to the effective value of the Homeric hexameter; and makes *Sigurd*, in this respect as well as in others, the most Homeric poem since Homer. The opening line, "There was a dwelling of kings ere the world was waxen old," strikes the new note at once with complete certainty. Very often, in lines like

"And so when the deed is ready, nowise the man shall lack,
But the wary foot is the surest, and the hasty oft turns back,"

or

"How then in the gates of Valhall shall the door of the gleaming ring
Clash to on the heel of Sigurd, as I follow on my king?"

it rises with effortless ease, and without any sense of imitation, into the authentic and unsurpassable Homeric tone.

The constructional quality of Morris's genius, in so far as it was not hampered by loyalty to the exact scope and lines of a Saga which had not wholly purged itself from barbarism, here reaches its climax. After *Sigurd*, his poetry shows, amid many fresh experiments and with a continued refinement of beauty, a reversion towards romance, and a renewal, in a new manner and on a different class of subject, of the lyrical impulse. This had always been one strand in the complex fabric of his main production. The lyrics in *Jason* and *The Earthly Paradise*, beyond their effect in accentuation of the narrative, are, like the intercalated lyrics in Tennyson's *Princess*, substantive poems. *Love is Enough* is a lyrical fabric wrought by extreme artifice into a dramatic framework. In *Sigurd* the two elements wholly coalesce, and the lyrical quality tells throughout, not by any sharp division, but by the varying scale of emotional tension. In subsequent work he resumes the pure lyric, often incorporated with the ballad structure. Some of the later pieces collected in *Poems by the Way* are Morris's last, and in one view even his supreme poetical achievement. For here, as in Shakespeare's romances, we reach a final simplicity, not the innocent simplicity of youth, but that of an accomplished art which, after its labours, relaxes itself in work which, to it, is play, and in which the decoration and the substance which it decorates become one and the same thing.

Comparisons between one poet and another are generally futile. In Morris's poetry we may be content to mark its actual notes of simplicity and sincerity, melodiousness and copiousness, and, after he had "found himself," a growing and fundamental sanity. His own straightforward simplicity reflects itself in the clarity of verse in which the expression is never involved, the meaning never in doubt. What are called his mannerisms were his natural and instinctive way of expressing himself. His melodiousness, as distinct from more complex harmonies, is unfailing and perhaps unsurpassed. His copiousness, perhaps excessive, came of the joy of a

craftsman in pouring out the products of his craft. The quality of his poetry varies, not as in Wordsworth according to the degree of "inspiration" that vitalizes patterns of language in which the craftsman's touch is fumbling, but rather according to the substantive value of the thought or incident or emotion upon which, whatever it be, he expends the same gift of capable workmanship. As it advances, his poetry passes from broken gleams and a bewildered questioning into a serious interpretation of life. In the earlier work, the obsession of death is a constant background; gradually this is swallowed up in a mastering sense of the wonderfulness of life. The turning-point is vividly indicated in that stanza of "apology" which ends with the single line that beyond all others of his has passed into universal currency.

> "Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing,
> I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
> Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
> Or bring again the pleasure of past years,
> Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears,
> Or hope again for aught that I can say,
> The idle singer of an empty day."

It is an estimate, a criticism, of all his own poetry up till then. The whole "message" (if such a word can be used) of his poetry thereafter, as of his work in other fields than poetry, was the exact converse: to show how this world is heaven or hell; to ease its burden by teaching men not to fear shadows; to make death merge in the splendour of life; to bring back pleasure to an age that had lost or forgotten it; and to give the world the courage of a new hope.

This was his work, whether it took shape in lyric or romance or epic, in refashioning of old tales or re-embodying of primary emotions, in a ballad of the greenwood or a vignette of landscape or a chant for Socialists: this was what he would have claimed as his title to remembrance, rather than that he had given to the English world a body of poetry which combines the pellucidity of Chaucer with the fluent richness of Ariosto.

J. W. Mackail.

I. From *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*

The Hollow Land

Christ keep the Hollow Land
  All the summer-tide;
Still we cannot understand
  Where the waters glide;

Only dimly seeing them
  Coldly slipping through
Many green-lipp'd cavern mouths,
  Where the hills are blue.

Summer Dawn

Pray but one prayer for me 'twixt thy closed lips,
  Think but one thought of me up in the stars.
The summer night waneth, the morning light slips,
  Faint and grey 'twixt the leaves of the aspen, betwixt the cloud-bars,
That are patiently waiting there for the dawn:
  Patient and colorless, through Heaven's gold
Waits to float through them along with the sun.
Far out in the meadows, above the young corn,
  The heavy elms wait, and restless and cold
The uneasy wind rises; the roses are dun;
Through the long twilight they pray for the dawn,
Round the lone house in the midst of the corn.
  Speak but one word to me over the corn,
  Over the tender, bow'd locks of the corn.

II. From *The Defence of Guenevere*

Launcelot and Guenevere

[From *King Arthur's Tomb*]

"Remember too,
  Wrung heart, how first before the knights there came
A royal bier, hung round with green and blue,
  About it shone great tapers with sick flame.

"And thereupon Lucius, the Emperor,
Lay royal-robed, but stone-cold now and dead,
Not able to hold sword or sceptre more,
But not quite grim; because his cloven head

"Bore no marks now of Launcelot's bitter sword,
Being by embalmers deftly solder'd up;
So still it seem'd the face of a great lord,
Being mended as a craftsman mends a cup.

"Also the heralds sung rejoicingly
To their long trumpets, 'Fallen under shield,
Here lieth Lucius, King of Italy,
Slain by Lord Launcelot in open field.'

"Thereat the people shouted 'Launcelot!'
And through the spears I saw you drawing nigh,
You and Lord Arthur—nay, I saw you not,
But rather Arthur, God would not let die,

"I hoped, these many years, he should grow great,
And in his great arms still encircle me,
Kissing my face, half-blinded with the heat
Of king's love for the queen I used to be.

"Launcelot, Launcelot, why did he take your hand,
When he had kissed me in his kingly way?
Saying, 'This is the knight whom all the land
Calls Arthur's banner, sword, and shield to-day;

"'Cherish him, love.' Why did your long lips cleave
In such strange way unto my fingers then?
So eagerly glad to kiss, so loath to leave
When you rose up? Why among helmed men

"Could I always tell you by your long strong arms,
And sway like an angel's in your saddle there?
Why sicken'd I so often with alarms
Over the tilt-yard? Why were you more fair

"Than aspens in the autumn at their best?
Why did you fill all lands with your great fame,
So that Breuse even, as he rode, fear'd lest
At turning of the way your shield should flame?"

Ladies' Gard

[From *Golden Wings*]

Midways of a walled garden,
In the happy poplar land,
Did an ancient castle stand,
With an old knight for a warden.

Many scarlet bricks there were
In its walls, and old grey stone;
Over which red apples shone
At the right time of the year.

On the bricks the green moss grew,
Yellow lichen on the stone,
Over which red apples shone;
Little war that castle knew.

Deep green water fill'd the moat,
Each side had a red-brick lip,
Green and mossy with the drip
Of dew and rain; there was a boat

Of carven wood, with hangings green
About the stern; it was great bliss
For lovers to sit there and kiss
In the hot summer noons, not seen.

Across the moat the fresh west wind
In very little ripples went;
The way the heavy aspens bent
Towards it was a thing to mind.

The painted drawbridge over it
Went up and down with gilded chains,
'Twas pleasant in the summer rains
Within the bridge-house there to sit.

There were five swans that ne'er did eat
The water-weeds, for ladies came
Each day, and young knights did the same,
And gave them cakes and bread for meat.

They had a house of painted wood,
A red roof gold-spiked over it,
Wherein upon their eggs to sit
Week after week; no drop of blood,

Drawn from men's bodies by sword-blows,
Came ever there, or any tear;
Most certainly from year to year
'Twas pleasant as a Provence rose.

III. From *The Life and Death of Jason*

A Sweet Song Sung not yet to any Man

I know a little gârden close
Set thick with lily and red rose,
Where I would wander if I might
From dewy dawn to dewy night,
And have one with me wandering.
And though within it no birds sing,
And though no pillared house is there,
And though the apple boughs are bare
Of fruit and blossom, would to God
Her feet upon the green grass trod,
And I beheld them as before.
There comes a murmur from the shore,
And in the place two fair streams are,
Drawn from the purple hills afar,
Drawn down unto the restless sea;
The hills whose flowers ne'er fed the bee,
The shore no ship has ever seen,
Still beaten by the billows green,
Whose murmur comes unceasingly
Unto the place for which I cry.
For which I cry both day and night,
For which I let slip all delight,
That maketh me both deaf and blind,
Careless to win, unskilled to find,
And quick to lose what all men seek.
Yet tottering as I am, and weak,

Still have I left a little breath
To seek within the jaws of death
An entrance to that happy place,
To seek the unforgotten face
Once seen, once kissed, once reft from me
Anigh the murmuring of the sea.

Orpheus Sings to the Argonauts

O death, that maketh life so sweet,
O fear, with mirth before thy feet,
What have ye yet in store for us,
The conquerors, the glorious?
Men say: "For fear that thou shouldst die
To-morrow, let to-day pass by
Flower-crowned and singing;" yet have we
Passed our to-day upon the sea,
Or in a poisonous unknown land,
With fear and death on either hand,
And listless when the day was done
Have scarcely hoped to see the sun
Dawn on the morrow of the earth,
Nor in our hearts have thought of mirth.
And while the world lasts, scarce again
Shall any sons of men bear pain
Like we have borne, yet be alive.
So surely not in vain we strive
Like other men for our reward;
Sweet peace and deep, the chequered sward
Beneath the ancient mulberry-trees,
The smooth-paved gilded palaces,
Where the shy thin-clad damsels sweet
Make music with their gold-ringed feet.
The fountain court amidst of it,
Where the short-haired slave maidens sit,
While on the veined pavement lie
The honied things and spicery
Their arms have borne from out the town.
The dancers on the thymy down

In summer twilight, when the earth
Is still of all things but their mirth,
And echoes borne upon the wind
Of others in like way entwined.
The merchant town's fair market-place
Where over many a changing face
The pigeons of the temple flit,
And still the outland merchants sit
Like kings above their merchandise,
Lying to foolish men and wise.
Ah! if they heard that we were come
Into the bay, and bringing home
That which all men have talked about,
Some men with rage, and some with doubt,
Some with desire, and some with praise;
Then would the people throng the ways,
Nor heed the outland merchandise,
Nor any talk, from fools or wise,
But tales of our accomplished quest.
What soul within the house shall rest
When we come home? The wily king
Shall leave his throne to see the thing;
No man shall keep the landward gate,
The hurried traveller shall wait
Until our bulwarks graze the quay,
Unslain the milk-white bull shall be
Beside the quivering altar-flame;
Scarce shall the maiden clasp for shame
Over her breast the raiment thin
The morn that Argo cometh in.
Then cometh happy life again
That prayeth well our toil and pain
In that sweet hour, when all our woe
But as a pensive tale we know,
Nor yet remember deadly fear;
For surely now if death be near,
Unthought-of is it, and unseen
When sweet is, that hath bitter been.

The Song of the Hesperides

O ye, who to this place have strayed,
That never for man's eyes was made,
Depart in haste, as ye have come,
And bear back to your sea-beat home
This memory of the age of gold,
And for your eyes, grown over-bold,
Your hearts shall pay in sorrowing,
For want of many a half-seen thing.

Lo, such as is this garden green,
In days past, all the world has been,
And what we know all people knew,
Save this, that unto worse all grew.
But since the golden age is gone,
This little place is left alone,
Unchanged, unchanging, watched of us,
The daughters of wise Hesperus.
Surely the heavenly Messenger
Full oft is fain to enter here,
And yet without must he abide;
Nor longeth less the dark king's bride
To set red lips unto that fruit
That erst made nought her mother's suit.
Here would Diana rest awhile,
Forgetful of her woodland guile,
Among these beasts that fear her nought.
Nor is it less in Pallas' thought,
Beneath our trees to ponder o'er
The wide, unfathomed sea of lore;
And oft-kissed Citheræa, no less
Weary of love, full fain would press
These flowers with unsandalled feet.

But unto us our rest is sweet,
Neither shall any man or God
Or lovely Goddess touch the sod
Whereunder old times buried lie,

Before the world knew misery.
Nor will we have a slave or king,
Nor yet will we learn anything
But that we know, that makes us glad;
While oft the very Gods are sad
With knowing what the Fates shall do.
  Neither from us shall wisdom go
To fill the hungering hearts of men,
Lest to them threescore years and ten
Come but to seem a little day,
Once given, and taken soon away.
Nay, rather let them find their life
Bitter and sweet, fulfilled of strife,
Restless with hope, vain with regret,
Trembling with fear, most strangely set
'Twixt memory and forgetfulness;
So more shall joy be, troubles less,
And surely when all this is past,
They shall not want their rest at last.
  Let earth and heaven go on their way,
While still we watch from day to day,
In this green place left all alone,
A remnant of the days long gone.

Medea at Corinth

She ceased, and moaning to herself she said:—
"Ah! when will all be ended? If the dead
Have unto them some little memory left
Of things that while they lived Fate from them reft,
Ere life itself was reft from them at last,
Yet would to God these days at least were past,
And all be done that here must needs be done!
  "Ah! shall I, living underneath the sun,
I wonder, wish for anything again,
Or ever know what pleasure means, and pain?—
—And for these deeds I do; and thou the first,
O woman, whose young beauty has so cursed
My hapless life, at least I save thee this—

The slow descent to misery from bliss,
With bitter torment growing day by day,
And faint hope lessening till it fades away
Into dull waiting for the certain blow.
But thou, who nought of coming fate dost know,
One overwhelming fear, one agony,
And in a little minute shalt thou be
Where thou wouldst be in threescore years at most,
And surely but a poor gift thou hast lost.
The new-made slave, the toiler on the sea,
The once rich fallen into poverty,
In one hour knows more grief than thou canst know;
And many an one there is who fain would go
And try their fortune in the unknown life
If they could win some ending to this strife,
Unlooked-for, sudden, as thine end shall be.
Kindly I deal with thee, mine enemy;
Since swift forgetfulness to thee I send.
But thou shalt die—his eyes shall see thine end—
Ah! if thy death alone could end it all!

"But ye—shall I behold you when leaves fall,
In some sad evening of the autumn-tide?
Or shall I have you sitting by my side
Amidst the feast, so that folk stare and say,
'Sure the grey wolf has seen the queen to-day?'
What! when I kneel in temples of the Gods,
Must I bethink me of the upturned sods,
And hear a voice say: 'Mother, wilt thou come
And see us resting in our new-made home,
Since thou wert used to make us lie full soft,
Smoothing our pillows many a time and oft?
O mother, now no dainty food we need,
Whereof thou once wert wont to have such heed.
O mother, now we need no gown of gold,
Nor in the winter time do we grow cold;
Thy hands would bathe us when we were thine own,
Now doth the rain wash every shining bone.
No pedagogue we need, for surely heaven
Lies spread above us, with the planets seven,
To teach us all its lore.'

"Ah! day by day
Would I have hearkened all the folk would say.
Ah! in the sweet beginning of your days
Would I have garnered every word of praise.
'What fearless backers of the untamed steed!'
'What matchless spears, what loyal friends at need!'
'What noble hearts, how bountiful and free!'
'How like their father on the troublous sea!'
"O sons, with what sweet counsels and what tears
Would I have hearkened to the hopes and fears
Of your first loves: what rapture had it been
Your dear returning footsteps to have seen
Amidst the happy warriors of the land;
But now—but now—this is a little hand
Too often kissed since love did first begin
To win such curses as it yet shall win,
When after all bad deeds there comes a worse;
Praise to the Gods! ye know not how to curse.
"But when in some dim land we meet again
Will ye remember all the loss and pain?
Will ye the form of children keep for aye
With thoughts of men? and 'Mother,' will ye say,
'Why didst thou slay us ere we came to know
That men die? hadst thou waited until now,
An easy thing it had been then to die,
For in the thought of immortality
Do children play about the flowery meads,
And win their heaven with a crown of weeds.'
"O children! that I would have died to save,
How fair a life of pleasure might ye have,
But for your mother:—nay, for thee, for thee,
For thee who might'st have lived so happily;
For thee, O traitor! who didst bring them here
Into this cruel world, this lovely bier
Of youth and love, and joy and happiness,
That unforeseeing happy fools still bless."

IV. From *The Earthly Paradise*

APOLOGY

Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing,
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasure of past years,
Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears,
Or hope again for aught that I can say,
The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather, when aweary of your mirth,
From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,
And, feeling kindly unto all the earth,
Grudge every minute as it passes by,
Made the more mindful that the sweet days die—
Remember me a little then I pray,
The idle singer of an empty day.

The heavy trouble, the bewildering care
That weighs us down who live and earn our bread,
These idle verses have no power to bear;
So let me sing of names remembered,
Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,
Or long time take their memory quite away
From us poor singers of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme
Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,
Telling a tale not too importunate
To those who in the sleepy region stay,
Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folk say, a wizard to a northern king
At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show,
That through one window men beheld the spring,
And through another saw the summer glow,
And through a third the fruited vines a-row,

While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,
Piped the drear wind of that December day.

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
If ye will read aright, and pardon me,
Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss
Midmost the beating of the steely sea,
Where tossed about all hearts of men must be;
Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay,
Not the poor singer of an empty day.

Michael's Ride

[From *The Man born to be King*]

Long time he rode, till suddenly,
When now the sun was broad and high,
From out a hollow where the yew
Still guarded patches of the dew,
He rode and saw that he had won
That highland's edge, and gazed upon
A valley that beneath the haze
Of that most fair of autumn days
Showed glorious; fair with golden sheaves
Rich with the darkened autumn-leaves,
Gay with the water-meadows green,
The bright blue streams that lay between,
The miles of beauty stretched away
From that bleak hill-side bare and grey,
Till white cliffs over slopes of vine
Drew 'gainst the sky a broken line.
And 'twixt the vineyards and the stream
Michael saw gilded spirelets gleam;
For, hedged with many a flowery close,
There lay the Castle of the Rose,
His hurried journey's aim and end.

Then downward he began to wend,
And 'twixt the flowery hedges sweet
He heard the hook smite down the wheat,

And murmur of the unseen folk;
But when he reached the stream that broke
The golden plain, but leisurely
He passed the bridge; for he could see
The masters of that ripening realm,
Cast down beneath an ancient elm
Upon a little strip of grass,
From hand to hand the pitcher pass,
While on the turf beside them lay
The ashen-handled sickles grey,
The matters of their cheer between:
Slices of white cheese, specked with green,
And green-striped onions and ryebread,
And summer apples faintly red
Even beneath the crimson skin;
And yellow grapes, well ripe and thin,
Plucked from the cottage gable-end.

And certes Michael felt their friend,
Hearing their voices, nor forgot
His boyhood and the pleasant spot
Beside the well-remembered stream;
And friendly did this water seem
As through its white-flowered weeds it ran
Bearing good things to beast and man.

The Castle on the Island

[From *The Lady of the Land*]

And there a lovely cloistered court he found,
A fountain in the midst o'erthrown and dry,
And in the cloister briers twining round
The slender shafts; the wondrous imagery
Outworn by more than many years gone by;
Because the country people, in their fear
Of wizardry, had wrought destruction here;

And piteously these fair things had been maimed;
There stood great Jove, lacking his head of might;

Here was the archer, swift Apollo, lamed;
The shapely limbs of Venus hid from sight
By weeds and shards; Diana's ankles light
Bound with the cable of some coasting ship;
And rusty nails through Helen's maddening lip.

Therefrom unto the chambers did he pass,
And found them fair still, midst of their decay,
Though in them now no sign of man there was,
And everything but stone had passed away
That made them lovely in that vanished day;
Nay, the mere walls themselves would soon be gone
And nought be left but heaps of mouldering stone.

But he, when all the place he had gone o'er
And with much trouble clomb the broken stair,
And from the topmost turret seen the shore
And his good ship drawn up at anchor there,
Came down again, and found a crypt most fair
Built wonderfully beneath the greatest hall,
And there he saw a door within the wall,

Well-hinged, close shut; nor was there in that place
Another on its hinges, therefore he
Stood there and pondered for a little space,
And thought: "Perchance some marvel I shall see,
For surely here some dweller there must be,
Because this door seems whole and new and sound,
While nought but ruin I can see around."

So with that word, moved by a strong desire,
He tried the hasp, that yielded to his hand,
And in a strange place, lit as by a fire
Unseen but near, he presently did stand;
And by an odorous breeze his face was fanned,
As though in some Arabian plain he stood,
Anigh the border of a spice-tree wood.

The Hosting of the Fiends

[From *The Ring given to Venus*]

And then swept onward through the night
A babbling crowd in raiment bright,
Wherein none listened aught at all
To what from other lips might fall,
And none might meet his fellow's gaze;
And still o'er every restless face
Passed restless shades of rage and pain,
And sickening fear and longing vain.
On wound that manifold agony
Unholpen, vile, till earth and sea
Grew silent, till the moonlight died
Before a false light blaring wide,
And from amidst that fearful folk
The Lord of all the pageant broke.

Most like a mighty king was he,
And crowned and sceptred royally;
As a white flame his visage shone,
Sharp, clear-cut as a face of stone;
But flickering flame, not flesh, it was;
And over it such looks did pass
Of wild desire, and pain, and fear,
As in his people's faces were,
But tenfold fiercer: furthermore,
A wondrous steed the Master bore,
Unnameable of kind or make,
Not horse, nor hippogriff, nor drake,
Like and unlike to all of these,
And flickering like the semblances
Of an ill dream, wrought as in scorn
Of sunny noon, fresh eve, and morn,
That feed the fair things of the earth.
And now brake out a mock of mirth
From all that host, and all their eyes
Were turned on Laurence in strange wise,
Who met the maddening fear that burned

Round his unholpen heart, and turned
Unto the dreadful king and cried:
"What errand go ye on? Abide,
Abide! for I have tarried long;
Turn thou to me, and right my wrong!
One of thy servants keeps from me
That which I gave her not; nay, see
What thing thy Master bids thee do!"

Then wearily, as though he knew
How all should be, the Master turned,
And his red eyes on Laurence burned,
As without word the scroll he took;
But as he touched the skin he shook
As though for fear, and presently
In a great voice he 'gan to cry:
"Shall this endure for ever, Lord?
Hast thou no care to keep thy word?
And must such double men abide?
Not mine, not mine, nor on thy side?
For as thou cursest them I curse:—
Make thy souls better, Lord, or worse!

Then spake he to the trembling man:
"What am I bidden, that I can;
Bide here, and thou shalt see thine own
Unto thy very feet cast down;
Then go and dwell in peace awhile."
Then round he turned with sneering smile
And once more lonely was the night,
And colourless with grey moonlight.

February

Noon—and the north-west sweeps the empty road,
The rain-washed fields from hedge to hedge are bare;
Beneath the leafless elms some hind's abode
Looks small and void, and no smoke meets the air
From its poor hearth: one lonely rook doth dare

The gale, and beats above the unseen corn,
Then turns, and whirling down the wind is borne.

Shall it not hap that on some dawn of May
Thou shalt awake, and, thinking of days dead,
See nothing clear but this same dreary day,
Of all the days that have passed o'er thine head?
Shalt thou not wonder, looking from thy bed,
Through green leaves on the windless east a-fire,
That this day too thine heart doth still desire?

Shalt thou not wonder that it liveth yet,
The useless hope, the useless craving pain,
That made thy face, that lonely noontide, wet
With more than beating of the chilly rain?
Shalt thou not hope for joy new born again,
Since no grief ever born can ever die
Through changeless change of seasons passing by?

The Book Speaks to Chaucer

O Master, O thou great of heart and tongue,
Thou well mayst ask me why I wander here,
In raiment rent of stories oft besung!
But of thy gentleness draw thou anear,
And then the heart of one who held thee dear
Mayst thou behold! So near as that I lay
Unto the singer of an empty day.

For this he ever said, who sent me forth
To seek a place amid thy company;
That howsoever little was my worth,
Yet was he worth e'en just so much as I;
He said that rhyme hath little skill to lie;
Nor feigned to cast his worser part away
In idle singing for an empty day.

I have beheld him tremble oft enough
At things he could not choose but trust to me,
Although he knew the world was wise and rough:

And never did he fail to let me see
His love,—his folly and faithlessness, maybe;
And still in turn I gave him voice to pray
Such prayers as cling about an empty day.

Thou, keen-eyed, reading me, mayst read him through,
For surely little is there left behind;
No power great deeds unnameable to do;
No knowledge for which words he may not find,
No love of things as vague as autumn wind—
Earth of the earth lies hidden by my clay,
The idle singer of an empty day!

Children we twain are, saith he, late made wise
In love, but in all else most childish still,
And seeking still the pleasure of our eyes,
And what our ears with sweetest sounds may fill;
Not fearing Love, lest these things he should kill;
Howe'er his pain by pleasure doth he lay,
Making a strange tale of an empty day.

Death have we hated, knowing not what it meant;
Life have we loved, through green leaf and through sere,
Though still the less we knew of its intent:
The Earth and Heaven through countless year on year,
Slow changing, were to us but curtains fair,
Hung round about a little room, where play
Weeping and laughter of man's empty day.

O Master, if thine heart could love us yet,
Spite of things left undone, and wrongly done,
Some place in loving hearts then should we get,
For thou, sweet-souled, didst never stand alone,
But knew'st the joy and woe of many an one—
By lovers dead, who live through thee, we pray,
Help thou us singers of an empty day!

V. From *Love is Enough*

The Land of the Dream

There is a place in the world, a great valley
That seems a green plain from the brow of the mountains,
But hath knolls and fair dales when adown there thou goest:
There are homesteads therein with gardens about them,
And fair herds of kine and grey sheep a-feeding,
And willow-hung streams wend through deep grassy meadows,
And a highway winds through them from the outer world coming:
Girthed about is the vale by a grey wall of mountains,
Rent apart in three places and tumbled together
In old times of the world when the earth-fires flowed forth:
And as you wend up these away from the valley
You think of the sea and the great world it washes:
But through two you may pass not, the shattered rocks shut them.
And up through the third there windeth a highway,
And its gorge is fulfilled by a black wood of yew-trees.
And I know that beyond, though mine eyes have not seen it,
A city of merchants beside the sea lieth.

The Music

Love is enough: draw near and behold me,
  Ye who pass by the way to your rest and your laughter,
  And are full of the hope of the dawn coming after;
For the strong of the world have bought me and sold me
  And my house is all wasted from threshold to rafter.
    Pass by me, and hearken, and think of me not!

Cry out and come near; for my ears may not hearken,
  And my eyes are grown dim as the eyes of the dying.
  Is this the grey rack o'er the sun's face a-flying?
Or is it your faces his brightness that darken?
  Comes a wind from the sea, or is it your sighing?
    Pass by me, and hearken, and pity me not!

Ye know not how void is your hope and your living:
Depart with your helping lest yet ye undo me!
Ye know not that at nightfall she draweth near to me,
There is soft speech between us and words of forgiving
Till in dead of the midnight her kisses thrill through me.
Pass by me, and hearken, and waken me not!

Wherewith will ye buy it, ye rich who behold me?
Draw out from your coffers your rest and your laughter,
And the fair gilded hope of the dawn coming after!
Nay this I sell not,—though ye bought me and sold me,—
For your house stored with such things from threshold to rafter.
Pass by me, I hearken, and think of you not!

The Return Home

Giles.

Come, o'ermuch gold mine eyes have seen,
And long now for the pathway green,
And rose-hung ancient walls of grey
Yet warm with sunshine gone away.

Joan.

Yea, full fain would I rest thereby,
And watch the flickering martins fly
About the long eave-bottles red
And the clouds lessening overhead:
E'en now meseems the cows are come
Unto the grey gates of our home,
And low to hear the milking-pail:
The peacock spreads abroad his tail
Against the sun, as down the lane
The milkmaids pass the moveless wain
And stable door, where the roan team
An hour agone began to dream
Over the dusty oats—
Come, love,
Noises of river and of grove
And moving things in field and stall
And night-birds' whistle shall be all

Of the world's speech that we shall hear
By then we come the garth anear:
For then the moon that hangs aloft
These thronged streets, lightless now and soft,
Unnoted, yea e'en like a shred
Of yon wide white cloud overhead,
Sharp in the dark star-sprinkled sky
Low o'er the willow boughs shall lie.

VI. From *Sigurd the Volsung*

Sigurd on Hindfell

So he rideth higher and higher, and the light grows great and strange,
And forth from the clouds it flickers, till at noon they gather and change,
And settle thick on the mountain, and hide its head from sight;
But the winds in a while are awakened, and day bettereth ere the night,
And, lifted a measureless mass o'er the desert crag-walls high,
Cloudless the mountain riseth against the sunset sky,
The sea of the sun grown golden, as it ebbs from the day's desire;
And the light that afar was a torch is grown a river of fire,
And the mountain is black above it, and below it is dark and dun;
And there is the head of Hindfell as an island in the sun.

Night falls, but yet rides Sigurd, and hath no thought of rest,
For he longs to climb that rock-world and behold the earth at its best;
But now 'mid the maze of the foot-hills he seeth the light no more,
And the stars are lovely and gleaming on the lightless heavenly floor.
So up and up he wendeth till the night is wearing thin;
And he rideth a rift of the mountain, and all is dark therein,
Till the stars are dimmed by dawning and the wakening world is cold;
Then afar in the upper rock-wall a breach doth he behold,
And a flood of light poured inward the doubtful dawning blinds:

So swift he rideth thither and the mouth of the breach he finds,
And sitteth awhile on Greyfell on the marvellous thing to gaze:
For lo, the side of Hindfell enwrapped by the fervent blaze,
And nought 'twixt earth and heaven save a world of flickering flame,
And a hurrying shifting tangle, where the dark rents went and came.

Great groweth the heart of Sigurd with uttermost desire,
And he crieth kind to Greyfell, and they hasten up, and nigher,
Till he draweth rein in the dawning on the face of Hindfell's steep:
But who shall heed the dawning where the tongues of that wild-fire leap?
For they weave a wavering wall, that driveth over the heaven
The wind that is born within it; nor ever aside is it driven
By the mightiest wind of the waste, and the rain-flood amidst it is nought;
And no wayfarer's door and no window the hand of its builder hath wrought.
But thereon is the Volsung smiling as its breath uplifteth his hair,
And his eyes shine bright with its image, and his mail gleams white and fair,
And his war-helm pictures the heavens and the waning stars behind:
But his neck is Greyfell stretching to snuff at the flame-wall blind,
And his cloudy flank upheaveth, and tinkleth the knitted mail,
And the gold of the uttermost waters is waxen wan and pale.

Now Sigurd turns in his saddle, and the hilt of the Wrath he shifts,
And draws a girth the tighter; then the gathered reins he lifts,
And crieth aloud to Greyfell, and rides at the wildfire's heart;
But the white wall wavers before him and the flame-flood rusheth apart,
And high o'er his head it riseth, and wide and wild is its roar
As it beareth the mighty tidings to the very heavenly floor:
But he rideth through its roaring as the warrior rides the rye,
When it bows with the wind of the summer and the hid spears draw anigh;
The white flame licks his raiment and sweeps through Greyfell's mane,

And bathes both hands of Sigurd and the hilts of Fafnir's bane,
And winds about his war-helm and mingles with his hair,
But nought his raiment dusketh or dims his glittering gear;
Then it fails and fades and darkens till all seems left behind,
And dawn and the blaze is swallowed in mid-mirk stark and blind.

But forth a little further and a little further on
And all is calm about him, and he sees the scorched earth wan
Beneath a glimmering twilight, and he turns his conquering eyes,
And a ring of pale slaked ashes on the side of Hindfell lies;
And the world of the waste is beyond it; and all is hushed and grey,
And the new-risen moon is a-paleing, and the stars grow faint with day.

The Wisdom of Brynhild

Be wise, and cherish thine hope in the freshness of the days,
And scatter its seed from thine hand in the field of the people's praise;
Then fair shall it fall in the furrow, and some the earth shall speed,
And the sons of men shall marvel at the blossom of the deed:
But some the earth shall speed not: nay rather, the wind of the heaven
Shall waft it away from thy longing—and a gift to the Gods hast thou given,
And a tree for the roof and the wall in the house of the hope that shall be,
Though it seemeth our very sorrow, and the grief of thee and me.

When thou hearest the fool rejoicing, and he saith, "It is over and past,
And the wrong was better than right, and hate turns into love at the last,
And we strove for nothing at all, and the Gods are fallen asleep;
For so good is the world a-growing that the evil good shall reap;"
Then loosen thy sword in the scabbard and settle the helm on thine head,
For men betrayed are mighty, and great are the wrongfully dead.

Wilt thou do the deed and repent it? thou hadst better never been born:
Wilt thou do the deed and exalt it? then thy fame shall be outworn:
Thou shalt do the deed and abide it, and sit on thy throne on high,
And look on today and tomorrow as those that never die.

Gunnar's Death Song

So perished the Gap of the Gaping, and the cold sea swayed and sang,
And the wind came down on the waters, and the beaten rock-walls rang;
Then the Sun from the south came shining, and the Starry Host stood round,
And the wandering Moon of the Heavens his habitation found;
And they knew not why they were gathered, nor the deeds of their shaping they knew:
But lo, Mid-Earth the Noble 'neath their might and their glory grew,
And the grass spread over its face, and the Night and the Day were born,
And it cried on the Death in the even, and it cried on the Life in the morn,
Yet it waxed and waxed, and knew not, and it lived and had not learned;
And where were the Framers that framed, and the Soul and the Might that had yearned?

On the Thrones are the Powers that fashioned, and they name the Night and the Day,
And the tide of the Moon's increasing, and the tide of his waning away:
And they name the years for the story; and the Lands they change and change,
The great and the mean and the little, that this unto that may be strange:
They met, and they fashioned dwellings, and the House of Glory they built;
They met, and they fashioned the Dwarf-kind, and the Gold and the Gifts and the Guilt.

There were twain, and they went upon earth, and were speechless unmighty and wan;
They were hopeless, deathless, lifeless, and the Mighty named them Man:
Then they gave them speech and power, and they gave them colour and breath;
And deeds and the hope they gave them, and they gave them Life and Death;
Yea, hope, as the hope of the Framers; yea, might, as the Fashioners had,
Till they wrought, and rejoiced in their bodies, and saw their sons and were glad:
And they changed their lives and departed, and came back as the leaves of the trees
Come back and increase in the summer:—and I, I, I am of these;
And I know of Them that have fashioned, and the deeds that have blossomed and grow;
But nought of the Gods' repentance, or the Gods' undoing I know.

O hearken, Kindreds and Nations, and all Kings of the plenteous earth,
Heed, ye that shall come hereafter, and are far and far from the birth!
I have dwelt in the world aforetime, and I called it the garden of God;
I have stayed my heart with its sweetness, and fair on its freshness I trod;
I have seen its tempest and wondered, I have cowered adown from its rain,
And desired the brightening sunshine, and seen it and been fain;
I have waked, time was, in its dawning; its noon and its even I wore;
I have slept unafraid of its darkness, and the days have been many and more:

I have dwelt with the deeds of the mighty; I have woven the web of the sword;
I have borne up the guilt nor repented; I have sorrowed nor spoken the word;
And I fought and was glad in the morning, and I sing in the night and the end:

So let him stand forth, the Accuser, and do on the death-shoon to wend;
For not here on the earth shall I hearken, nor on earth for the dooming shall stay,
Nor stretch out mine hand for the pleading; for I see the spring of the day
Round the doors of the golden Valhall, and I see the mighty arise,
And I hearken the voice of Odin, and his mouth on Gunnar cries,
And he nameth the Son of Giuki, and cries on deeds long done,
And the fathers of my fathers, and the sons of yore agone.

VII. From *Poems by the Way*

Mother and Son

Lo, amidst London I lift thee,
and how little and light thou art,
And thou without hope or fear,
thou fear and hope of my heart!
Lo here thy body beginning,
O son, and thy soul and thy life;
But how will it be if thou livest,
and enterest into the strife,
And in love we dwell together
when the man is grown in thee,
When thy sweet speech I shall hearken,
and yet 'twixt thee and me
Shall rise that wall of distance,
that round each one doth grow,
And maketh it hard and bitter
each other's thought to know.
Now, therefore, while yet thou art little
and hast no thought of thine own,
I will tell thee a word of the world;
of the hope whence thou hast grown,
Of the love that once begat thee,
of the sorrow that hath made
Thy little heart of hunger,
and thy hands on my bosom laid.

Then mayst thou remember hereafter,
as whiles when people say
All this hath happened before
in the life of another day;
So mayst thou dimly remember
this tale of thy mother's voice,
As oft in the calm of dawning
I have heard the birds rejoice,
As oft I have heard the storm-wind
go moaning through the wood;
And I knew that earth was speaking,
and the mother's voice was good.

Now, to thee alone will I tell it
that thy mother's body is fair,
In the guise of the country maidens
who play with the sun and the air;
Who have stood in the row of the reapers
in the August afternoon,
Who have sat by the frozen water
in the high day of the moon,
When the lights of the Christmas feasting
were dead in the house on the hill,
And the wild geese gone to the salt-marsh
had left the winter still.
Yea, I am fair, my firstling;
if thou couldst but remember me!
The hair that thy small hand clutcheth
is a goodly sight to see;
I am true, but my face is a snare;
soft and deep are my eyes,
And they seem for men's beguiling
fulfilled with the dreams of the wise.
Kind are my lips, and they look
as though my soul had learned
Deep things I have never heard of.
My face and my hands are burned
By the lovely sun of the acres;
three months of London town
And thy birth-bed have bleached them indeed,
"But lo, where the edge of the gown"

(So said thy father) "is parting
the wrist that is white as the curd
From the brown of the hand that I love,
bright as the wing of a bird."

Young Love

It was many a day that we laughed,
as over the meadows we walked,
And many a day I hearkened
and the pictures came as he talked;
It was many a day that we longed,
and we lingered late at eve
Ere speech from speech was sundered,
and my hand his hand could leave.
Then I wept when I was alone,
and I longed till the daylight came;
And down the stairs I stole,
and there was our housekeeping dame
(No mother of me, the foundling)
kindling the fire betimes
Ere the haymaking folk went forth
to the meadows down by the limes;
All things I saw at a glance;
the quickening fire-tongues leapt
Through the crackling heap of sticks,
and the sweet smoke up from it crept,
And close to the very hearth
the low sun flooded the floor,
And the cat and her kittens played
in the sun by the open door.
The garden was fair in the morning,
and there in the road he stood
Beyond the crimson daisies
and the bush of southernwood.

The Day is Coming

Come hither, lads, and hearken,
for a tale there is to tell,
Of the wonderful days a-coming,
when all shall be better than well.

And the tale shall be told of a country,
a land in the midst of the sea,
And folk shall call it England
in the days that are going to be.

There more than one in a thousand
in the days that are yet to come,
Shall have some hope of the morrow
some joy of the ancient home.

For then, laugh not, but listen
to this strange tale of mine,
All folk that are in England
shall be better lodged than swine.

Then a man shall work and bethink him
and rejoice in the deeds of his hand,
Nor yet come home in the even
too faint and weary to stand.

Men in that time a-coming
shall work and have no fear
For to-morrow's lack of earning
and the hunger-wolf anear.

I tell you this for a wonder,
that no man then shall be glad
Of his fellow's fall and mishap
to snatch at the work he had.

For that which the worker winneth
shall then be his indeed,

Nor shall half be reaped for nothing
by him that sowed no seed.

O strange new wonderful justice!
But for whom shall we gather the gain?
For ourselves and for each of our fellows,
and no hand shall labour in vain.

Then all Mine and all Thine shall be Ours,
and no more shall any man crave
For riches that serve for nothing
but to fetter a friend for a slave.

And what wealth then shall be left us
when none shall gather gold
To buy his friend in the market,
and pinch and pine the sold?

Nay, what save the lovely city,
and the little house on the hill,
And the wastes and the woodland beauty,
and the happy fields we till;

And the homes of ancient stories,
the tombs of the mighty dead;
And the wise men seeking out marvels,
and the poet's teeming head;

And the painter's hand of wonder;
and the marvellous fiddle-bow,
And the banded choirs of music:
all those that do and know.

For all these shall be ours and all men's,
nor shall any lack a share
Of the toil and the gain of living
in the days when the world grows fair.

Thunder in the Garden

When the boughs of the garden hang heavy with rain
And the blackbird reneweth his song,
And the thunder departing yet rolleth again,
I remember the ending of wrong.

When the day that was dusk while his death was aloof
Is ending wide-gleaming and strange
For the clearness of all things beneath the world's roof
I call back the wild chance and the change.

For once we twain sat through the hot afternoon
While the rain held aloof for a while,
Till she, the soft-clad, for the glory of June
Changed all with the change of her smile.

For her smile was of longing, no longer of glee,
And her fingers, entwined with mine own,
With caresses unquiet sought kindness of me
For the gift that I never had known.

Then down rushed the rain, and the voice of the thunder
Smote dumb all the sound of the street,
And I to myself was grown nought but a wonder,
As she leaned down my kisses to meet.

That she craved for my lips that had craved her so often,
And the hand that had trembled to touch,
That the tears filled her eyes I had hoped not to soften
In this world was a marvel too much.

It was dusk 'mid the thunder, dusk e'en as the night,
When first brake out our love like the storm,
But no night-hour was it, and back came the light
While our hands with each other were warm.

And her smile, killed with kisses, came back as at first
As she rose up and led me along,
And out to the garden, where nought was athirst,
And the blackbird renewing his song.

Earth's fragrance went with her, as in the wet grass
Her feet little hidden were set;
She bent down her head, 'neath the roses to pass,
And her arm with the lily was wet.

In the garden we wandered while day waned apace
And the thunder was dying aloof;
Till the moon o'er the minster-wall lifted his face,
And grey gleamed out the lead of the roof.

Then we turned from the blossoms, and cold were they grown;
In the trees the wind westering moved;
Till over the threshold back fluttered her gown,
And in the dark house was I loved.

The Flowering Orchard

[*For a Silk Embroidery*]

Lo, silken my garden
  and silken my sky,
And silken my apple-boughs
  hanging on high;

All wrought by the worm
  in the peasant-carle's cot
On the mulberry leafage
  when summer was hot.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

[ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE was born on April 5, 1837, in London. He was the eldest son of Admiral Swinburne and Lady Jane, daughter of the third Earl of Ashburnham. He was sent to Eton in 1849 and left in 1853. After some private work with a tutor, he matriculated at Balliol College, Oxford, in 1856. He left Oxford, without a degree, in 1859, and settled in London. In 1860 his earliest volume, a brace of dramas in verse, was published, but he became first known to the public by *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), which was quickly followed by *Chastelard* (1865) and *Poems and Ballads* (1866). The last named was accused of indecency and profanity, and produced a vociferous protest. The poet, however, was little moved, and continued to write in prose and verse with the greatest assiduity. His life, which was wholly dedicated to literature, was without external movement. In 1879, in consequence of his state of health, he was induced to take up his abode with a friend at Putney, and here he remained for nearly thirty years, in great retirement, which was partly forced upon him by his deafness. His daily walk over Putney Hill became classic. He died of pneumonia, after a short illness, on the 10th of April, 1909, and was buried at Bonchurch among the graves of his family.]

The gift by which Swinburne first won his way to the hearts of a multitude of readers was unquestionably the melody of his verse. The choruses in *Atalanta in Calydon* and the metrical inventions in *Poems and Ballads* acted on the ear of his contemporaries like an enchantment. Swinburne carried the prosody of the romantic age to its extreme point of mellifluousness, and he introduced into it a quality of speed, of throbbing velocity, which no one, not even Shelley, had anticipated. In some of the odes in *Songs before Sunrise* he went even farther, and produced effects of such sonorous volume and such elaborate antiphonal harmony that it was obvious that English verse, along those lines, could proceed no farther. In point of fact, after 1871, it did proceed no farther even in Swinburne's own hands, his later efforts to surpass his own miraculous virtuosity being less and less completely satisfactory, and indeed

more and more like an imitation of himself. The poem called *Mater Triumphalis* may be taken as the extreme instance of Swinburne's redundant volubility of sound before his talent in this direction began to decline, and we may hold it to be certain that in this species of prosody, about which a strong heretical reaction has long ago begun to set in, no other poet will ever surpass or even equal Swinburne.

This undisputed mastery in regular verse has, however, from the first tended to obscure the intellectual and imaginative qualities of a poet who was almost more directly and exclusively endowed with them than any one else who ever lived. There may, that is to say, have been greater poets than he, but none was ever more penetrated with a sense of his high calling, or enjoyed an intenser exhilaration in the performance of it. He was preserved by a remarkable strain of common sense from losing his sanity and even from plunging into extravagance, but he was always at the edge of frenzy, always simmering on the flames of his enthusiasm. This high literary temperature of Swinburne's was one of his most notable characteristics, and it must be borne in mind in every attempt to estimate the value of his work. It gave to his poems an impression of heat and speed, a sort of volcanic impetus, which delighted those who liked it and infuriated those who did not. In the beginning, it was impossible to estimate the poems of Swinburne without prejudice. There is still no recent figure more difficult to approach judicially.

To begin to comprehend him we must perceive that he was completely dominated by the intuitive forms of sensibility, in the Kantian sense. His mind and character are neither intelligible nor worthy of attention unless we regard them from the æsthetic point of view. Other great poets present various facets of being which may not be so important or so striking as their literary side, but are perceptible. Swinburne alone is a man of letters, or nothing at all. His long life offers us a series of extraordinary negatives; he was never married, he was never responsible for the career of another human being, he possessed no home of his own, he exercised no business or profession, he passed through the years like the fabulous Bird of Paradise, which never perched, because it had no feet. Swinburne never perched, but we may pursue the image so far as to say that when he was weary of his ceaseless flight, in middle age, he sank upon a nest from which he never had the energy to rise again. Charles Darwin tells us that "birds appear

to be the most æsthetic of all animals"; Swinburne, who was often compared with a bird, was the most æsthetic of all human beings.

The dullness of his final thirty years in a sort of voluntary captivity at Putney has tended to obscure the picturesque legend of his prime, to which it is essential that memory should return. His childhood and early youth—contrary to the customary idea—were not artistically productive; his old age was monotonous and insipid; but there was a middle period of about twenty years in which he flamed like a comet right across our poetical heavens. This period extended from his last term at Oxford to the rapid decline of his energy when he had passed his fortieth birthday. During the first half of this part of his career he was known only to a close circle of admirers; from 1865 to 1875, or a little later, he was the cynosure and centre of public curiosity, awakening in the latter case such passions of adoration and loathing, rapture and fear, as literature had wholly ceased to rouse since 1815. He represented to a dazzled generation the uncontrolled worship of beauty, and he did so with unrivalled power because he was so disinterested. The world was astonished at the phenomenon of a voice which rang out like that of the angel of the Morning Star, and which yet, so far as action went, was nothing but a voice. Swinburne reminded us of the hero of Gautier's novel (which he admired so extravagantly) "dont la sensualité imaginative s'est compliquée et raffinée, avant l'expérience, dans les musées et les bibliothèques." Swinburne displayed a prodigious sensibility, which was fed on books and pictures, not on life.

We shall, therefore, not merely fail to appreciate the position of Swinburne, but stumble blindly in our examination of his qualities, if we do not begin by perceiving that, to a degree unparalleled, he was cerebral in all his forces. He was an unbodied intelligence "hidden in the light of thought," showering a rain of melody from some altitude untouched by the drawbacks and privileges of mortality. Tennyson might have been a farmer, Browning a stockbroker; Rossetti was a painter and Morris an upholsterer; but it is impossible to conceive Swinburne as "taking up" any species of useful employment. To our great good fortune, he was possessed of what are called "moderate means," which happily clung to him, by no conscious effort of his own, to the end of his days. He was therefore able to spin out his dream and his music without any species of material disturbance, his only approaches to "action" being the chimerical controversies, always on æsthetic questions,

in which he engaged with mimic fury. These were to him what golf is to other ageing men: they were a form of health-preserving exercise.

It might have been supposed that a being so isolated from the common occupations of mankind, and so exclusively saturated in literature, would be imitative, artificial, and ineffective when he came to the task of composition. But the paradox is that Swinburne, soaked as he was in the wisdom of the ages, responsive like an Æolian harp to every breath of the wind of past poetry, is one of the most definitely original of all writers. He is *himself* to a fault, to our positive impatience and annoyance; he has a quality of style, a sort of perfume, which is so exclusively his own that it vexes us when or where it ceases to please us. Swinburne was a master of every artifice of imitation, and yet—except where he is intentionally a parodist—he is instantly recognizable under all disguises. He floods whatever he touches with his own pungent musk.

By heritage on both sides Algernon Swinburne was an aristocrat, and of his descent and bringing-up he retained something perceptible in his poetry—its fastidiousness, its independence—which was affected neither by popular prejudice nor by the authority of tradition. In private life his manners were affable and gracious, but they were ceremonious too; and we may see in his poetical attitude a distinct trace of hauteur. Apart from this emphasis, this touch of conscious dignity, there was in his original gesture towards literature a certain arrogant disregard of public taste, a disdain which was of the aristocratic order. At a marvellously early age, and apparently by unaided instinct, he discovered the poets who were, to the very close of his life, to remain his most cherished companions. The little Eton schoolboy who selected Landor, Marlowe, and Catullus as his favourite writers, without the smallest affectation, because they pleased him best, because they thrilled him with rapture, might be expected, when, long years later, he too became a writer, to trouble himself not a whit about the accepted fashions of the hour.

Swinburne's attitude of rebellion was not plainly discerned, though it was indicated, in his earlier publications, which were all of the dramatic order. But from 1859 until he published *Poems and Ballads* in 1866 he was preparing what amounted to a lyrical and therefore apparently a personal manifesto of rebellion against the poetical taste of the day. The key-note of that much-discussed volume was a mutinous one; on the ethical, the religious, and the

purely literary sides it was essentially revolutionary and provocative. The general public and the reviewers, outraged in their dearest convictions, sought a refuge in an indignant reproof of "the overpassionate sensuousness" of *Poems and Ballads*. It was treated so vehemently as a work of unseemly tendency, as an incentive to dissolute conduct, that a certain stigma of practical immorality has rested upon it ever since. But although this view was very loftily presented by the moralists of 1866, it was founded less upon fact than upon terror and prejudice. It was only so far true as it is true to say that any reference to certain sexual aberrations may tend to immorality. But what the poet was actually engaged in projecting was a reaction not against the morals but against the æsthetic authorities of the hour, with the design of replacing them by a wider range of intellectual interests, a warmer glow of imagination, and a more spirited exercise of executive skill. The result of contemplating "Dora" to excess was to create a curiosity as to the case of "Anactoria." Alike in the classic, the mediæval, and the biblical subjects of which *Poems and Ballads* treat, the moral or immoral significance of the poet's statement was very slight in comparison with the artistic passion which he exercised in making it, his object being in all cases beauty, and nothing but beauty, even where the subject might seem to demand a reprobation which it was none of his business to supply.

He presented a new ideal of poetry, in defiance of the mid-Victorian Muses:

> "Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion!
> All the Loves wept, listening; sick with anguish,
> Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo;
> Fear was upon them,
> While the tenth sang wonderful things they knew not."

Well satisfied with the effect of his ethical lyrics, Swinburne turned to the transcendental study of politics; or rather, he now concentrated for some years upon this subject elements which had long existed side by side with his analysis of passion. We must go back to 1849, when the extraordinary little boy, as he read the Italian newspapers in the College library at Eton, perceived Mazzini entering Florence in triumph and proclaiming the short-lived Republic of Tuscany. From that deceptive moment, from that flash in the cloud, the eyes of Algernon Swinburne were riveted upon the deliverer of Italy. It was to be long before the worship of

Swinburne for Mazzini was to become articulate, but it continued to intensify, while the irritation against kings and priests grew more and more violent, until the full volume and vehemence of it was poured out upon the world in the *Songs before Sunrise* of 1871. The revolutionary aspirations of which Swinburne made himself the trumpet were mainly those of one country, and that not his own; he was practically the mouthpiece of what he called "Italia, the world's wonder, the world's care." This would greatly restrict our final interest in the collection of poems, were it not that the poet combined with his fury for Italian revolution a whole system of philosopical considerations. These were so original and profound that they must always give such pieces as *Hertha* and *Tiresias* and the *Prelude* a permanent value not to be measured in terms of Aspromonte or Mentana. The emotion of the poet in presence of the supreme and eternal characteristics of the universe gives to the noblest parts of *Songs before Sunrise* an unparalleled intensity.

But, meanwhile, in several dramas, of which *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Chastelard* are the most important, Swinburne had shown himself desirous to compete with the grêat playwrights of Athens and of Elizabeth. These chamber-plays were diversified with enchanting lyrics, but they are mainly composed in a highly competent and suave blank verse, the merit of which, however, does not prevent our missing something of the burning colour and vehement motion of the wholly lyrical volumes. Swinburne was never weary of the dramatic form, and he continued to cultivate it to the very close of his life. The dozen plays which are enrolled in the list of his writings do not exhaust the tale of his dramatic experiments. Among them all *Bothwell* stands out as theatrically the most successful; it approaches near to our conception of what a vast theatrical romance should be, and the characters in it are built up with great solicitude and deliberation. Of the choral plays *Erechtheus*, though it can never enjoy the popularity of *Atalanta*, has a majesty of ceremonial perfection hardly to be sought elsewhere in English literature. But Swinburne, in spite of all his effort, remains a lyrical poet who crowded an imaginary stage with historical and literary rather than histrionic conceptions.

If he was never wholly successful in drama, he was still less so in narrative. He had no faculty for telling a story either in prose or in verse, and in this he is much inferior not only to William Morris, but even to D. G. Rossetti. Swinburne, however, was persistently anxious to excel in this direction, and by dint of immense labour he

completed a romantic epic, *Tristram of Lyonesse*, which he hoped would be the crowning triumph of his career. In spite, however, of passages of extreme beauty—all of them of the lyrical order—*Tristram* was found to possess the fatal fault of making no progress in the telling of its tale. In the phrase of Marvell, the reader of it exclaims:—

> "Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
> Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass,"

the complication and excess of ornament positively choking the progress of the narrative. If *Tristram of Lyonesse*, however, is a splendid failure, it is important as illustrating a side of Swinburne's poetry which is of great importance, his passion for and intimate knowledge of the sea. Like the child in *Thalassius* (a consciously autobiographical poem),

> "The soul of [Swinburne's] senses felt
> The passionate pride of deep-sea pulses. . . .
> And with his heart
> The tidal throb of all the tides kept rhyme."

The only physical exercises in which at any time of his life he took pleasure were riding and swimming, each of which ministered to his craving for rapid and impetuous movement. He is like a swimmer and a rider in his dithyrambic melodies, and there is an intimate connexion between the vehemence of his poetry and his delight in headlong exercise. But in his continuous passion for and cultivation of the sea there is more than this. When he was in middle life, and his bodily fire had much decayed, he wrote, in a private letter, "As for the sea, its salt *must* have been in my blood before I was born. . . . It shows the *truth* of my endless passionate returns to the sea in all my verse." No one, indeed, has ever questioned either the sincerity or the felicity of the constant allusions to the sea which animate, with a marvellous variety, almost every work which Swinburne has signed. In this he surpasses all other poets, for they have celebrated deeds on ships or the life of the maritime profession, but Swinburne more than any of them has dealt with the various moods, appearances, and voices of the element itself. In particular he has introduced, with magical effect, a new *motif* into poetry, the physical intoxication of the swimmer, employing it as a symbol of the intense and hazardous progress of the soul through the mystery of experience.

It does not lead us far to inquire, with the critics of forty years ago, what Swinburne owes to Greece and France and Northumberland, or to trace in him evidences of the influence of Baudelaire or Shelley, of Marlowe or of Victor Hugo. We grant that this great musician was of the composite order, that his genius was built up with precious materials for which he had ransacked the ages. But he melted these materials in a fire of intellectual passion hotter than that possessed by any of his contemporaries, and he applied the result explosively to the poetical conventions of his youth. He compelled the world at large to take a more exalted view than it ever had taken of the heritage of the past, and he added to that treasure a magnificent contribution of his own. He was a disinterested enthusiast, and Beauty was never celebrated in purer or more rapturous music.

EDMUND GOSSE.

[From *Atalanta in Calydon*]

CHORUS

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamour of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendour and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!

For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remember'd is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

CHORUS

Before the beginning of years
  There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
  Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
  Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
  And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
  Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
  And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
  Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
  From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
  And dust of the labouring earth;
And bodies of things to be
  In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
  And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after,
  And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
  That his strength might endure for a span,
With travail and heavy sorrow,
  The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
  They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
  They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
  For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labour and thought,
  A time to serve and to sin;

They gave him light in his ways,
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;
With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
Between a sleep and a sleep.

Itylus

Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,
The soft south whither thine heart is set?
Shall not the grief of the old time follow?
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth?
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the south;
But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,
From tawny body and sweet small mouth
Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,
All spring through till the spring be done,
Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,
Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,
Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's guest-chamber,
How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet?
For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget and death remember,
Till thou remember and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
Hast thou the heart? is it all past over?
Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the spring:
But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember
And over my head the waves have met;
But thou wouldst tarry or I would follow
Could I forget or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
The heart's division divideth us.
Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow
To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.
Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to follow,
The small slain body, the flower-like face,
Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that follow,
The voice of the child's blood crying yet,
Who hath remembered me? who hath forgotten?
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.

A Match

If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
Green pleasure or grey grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
And laughs of maid and boy;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mouth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain.

From "The Triumph of Time"

There lived a singer in France of old
By the tideless dolorous midland sea.
In a land of sand and ruin and gold
There shone one woman, and none but she.
And finding life for her love's sake fail,
Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,
Touched land, and saw her as life grew cold,
And praised God, seeing; and so died he.

Died, praising God for his gift and grace:
For she bowed down to him weeping, and said
"Live;" and her tears were shed on his face
Or ever the life in his face was shed.
The sharp tears fell through her hair, and stung
Once, and her close lips touched him and clung
Once, and grew one with his lips for a space;
And so drew back, and the man was dead.

O brother, the gods were good to you.
Sleep, and be glad while the world endures.
Be well content as the years wear through;
Give thanks for life, and the loves and lures;
Give thanks for life, O brother, and death,
For the sweet last sound of her feet, her breath,
For gifts she gave you, gracious and few,
Tears and kisses, that lady of yours.

Rest, and be glad of the gods; but I,
How shall I praise them, or how take rest?
There is not room under all the sky
For me that know not of worst or best,
Dream or desire of the days before,
Sweet things or bitterness, any more.
Love will not come to me now though I die,
As love came close to you, breast to breast.

I shall never be friends again with roses;
I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note grown strong
Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,
As a wave of the sea turned back by song.
There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,
Face to face with its own desire;
A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes;
I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

The pulse of war and passion of wonder,
The heavens that murmur, the sounds that shine,
The stars that sing and the loves that thunder,
The music burning at heart like wine,
An armed archangel whose hands raise up
All senses mixed in the spirit's cup
Till flesh and spirit are molten in sunder—
These things are over, and no more mine.

These were a part of the playing I heard
Once, ere my love and my heart were at strife;
Love that sings and hath wings as a bird,
Balm of the wound and heft of the knife.

Fairer than earth is the sea, and sleep
Than overwatching of eyes that weep,
Now time has done with his one sweet word,
The wine and leaven of lovely life.

I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,
Fill the days of my daily breath
With fugitive things not good to treasure,
Do as the world doth, say as it saith;
But if we had loved each other—O sweet,
Had you felt, lying under the palms of your feet,
The heart of my heart, beating harder with pleasure
To feel you tread it to dust and death—

Ah, had I not taken my life up and given
All that life gives and the years let go,
The wine and honey, the balm and leaven,
The dreams reared high and the hopes brought low?
Come life, come death, not a word be said;
Should I lose you living, and vex you dead?
I never shall tell you on earth; and in heaven,
If I cry to you then, will you hear or know?

Rococo

Take hands and part with laughter;
Touch lips and part with tears;
Once more and no more after,
Whatever comes with years.
We twain shall not remeasure
The ways that left us twain;
Nor crush the lees of pleasure
From sanguine grapes of pain.

We twain once well in sunder,
What will the mad gods do
For hate with me, I wonder,
Or what for love with you?

Forget them till November,
And dream there 's April yet;
Forget that I remember,
And dream that I forget.

Time found our tired love sleeping,
And kissed away his breath;
But what should we do weeping,
Though light love sleep to death?
We have drained his lips at leisure,
Till there 's not left to drain
A single sob of pleasure,
A single pulse of pain.

Dream that the lips once breathless
Might quicken if they would;
Say that the soul is deathless;
Dream that the gods are good;
Say March may wed September,
And the time divorce regret;
But not that you remember,
And not that I forget.

We have heard from hidden places
What love scarce lives and hears:
We have seen on fervent faces
The pallor of strange tears:
We have trod the wine-vat's treasure,
Whence, ripe to steam and stain,
Foams round the feet of pleasure
The blood-red must of pain.

Remembrance may recover
And time bring back to time
The name of your first lover,
The ring of my first rhyme;
But rose-leaves of December
The frosts of June shall fret
The day that you remember,
The day that I forget.

The snake that hides and hisses
In heaven we twain have known;
The grief of cruel kisses,
The joy whose mouth makes moan,
The pulse's pause and measure,
Where in one furtive vein
Throbs through the heart of pleasure
The purple blood of pain.

We have done with tears and treasons,
And love for treason's sake;
Room for the swift new seasons,
The years that burn and break,
Dismantle and dismember
Men's days and dreams, Juliette,
For love may not remember,
But time will not forget.

Life treads down love in flying,
Time withers him at root;
Bring all dead things and dying,
Reaped sheaf and ruined fruit,
Where, crushed by three days' pressure,
Our three days' love lies slain;
And earlier leaf of pleasure,
And latter flower of pain.

Breathe close upon the ashes,
It may be flame will leap;
Unclose the soft close lashes,
Lift up the lids, and weep.
Light love's extinguished ember,
Let one tear leave it wet
For one that you remember
And ten that you forget.

In Memory of Walter Savage Landor

Back to the flower-town, side by side,
The bright months bring,
New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
Filled full of sun;
All things come back to her, being free;
All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
Flowers that were dead
Live, and old suns revive; but not
That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
Far north, I hear
One face shall never turn to me
As once this year:

Shall never smile and turn and rest
On mine as there,
Nor one most sacred hand be prest
Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before;
The youngest to the oldest singer
That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In holiest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.

But thou, if anything endure,
If hope there be,
O spirit that man's life left pure,
Man's death set free,

Not with disdain of days that were
  Look earthward now;
Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
  The imperial brow;

Come back in sleep, for in the life
  Where thou art not
We find none like thee. Time and strife
  And the world's lot

Move thee no more; but love at least
  And reverent heart
May move thee, royal and released
  Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
  Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
  His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from afar,
  Mix with thy name
As morning-star with evening-star
  His faultless fame.

The Garden of Proserpine

Here, where the world is quiet,
  Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
  In doubtful dreams of dreams,
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
  A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
  And men that laugh and weep,
Of what may come hereafter
  For men that sow to reap:

I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers,
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbour,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labour,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes,
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw hither,
And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be,

That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

Love at Sea

We are in love's land to-day;
Where shall we go?
Love, shall we start or stay,
Or sail or row?
There 's many a wind and way,
And never a May but May;
We are in love's hand to-day;
Where shall we go?

Our land-wind is the breath
Of sorrows kissed to death
And joys that were;
Our ballast is a rose;
Our way lies where God knows
And love knows where.
We are in love's hand to-day—

Our seamen are fledged Loves,
Our masts are bills of doves,
Our decks fine gold;
Our ropes are dead maids' hair,
Our stores are love-shafts fair
And manifold.
We are in love's land to-day—

Where shall we land you, sweet?
On fields of strange men's feet,
  Or fields near home?
Or where the fire-flowers blow,
Or where the flowers of snow
  Or flowers of foam?
    We are in love's hand to-day—

Land me, she says, where love
Shows but one shaft, one dove,
  One heart, one hand.
—A shore like that, my dear,
Lies where no man will steer,
  No maiden land.

Hendecasyllabics

In the month of the long decline of roses
I, beholding the summer dead before me,
Set my face to the sea and journeyed silent,
Gazing eagerly where above the sea-mark
Flame as fierce as the fervid eyes of lions
Half divided the eyelids of the sunset;
Till I heard as it were a noise of waters
Moving tremulous under feet of angels
Multitudinous, out of all the heavens;
Knew the fluttering wind, the fluttered foliage,
Shaken fitfully, full of sound and shadow;
And saw, trodden upon by noiseless angels,
Long mysterious reaches fed with moonlight,
Sweet sad straits in a soft subsiding channel,
Blown about by the lips of winds I knew not,
Winds not born in the north nor any quarter,
Winds not warm with the south nor any sunshine;
Heard between them a voice of exultation,
"Lo, the summer is dead, the sun is faded,
Even like as a leaf the year is withered,
All the fruits of the day from all her branches
Gathered, neither is any left to gather.
All the flowers are dead, the tender blossoms,

All are taken away; the season wasted,
Like an ember among the fallen ashes.
Now with light of the winter days, with moonlight,
Light of snow, and the bitter light of hoarfrost,
We bring flowers that fade not after autumn,
Pale white chaplets and crowns of latter seasons,
Fair false leaves (but the summer leaves were falser),
Woven under the eyes of stars and planets
When low light was upon the windy reaches
Where the flower of foam was blown, a lily
Dropt among the sonorous fruitless furrows
And green fields of the sea that make no pasture:
Since the winter begins, the weeping winter,
All whose flowers are tears, and round his temples
Iron blossom of frost is bound for ever."

[From *Songs before Sunrise*]

FROM "HERTHA"

The tree many-rooted
That swells to the sky
With frondage red-fruited,
The life-tree am I;
In the buds of your lives is the sap of my leaves: ye shall live and not die.

But the Gods of your fashion
That take and that give,
In their pity and passion
That scourge and forgive,
They are worms that are bred in the bark that falls off; they shall die and not live.

My own blood is what stanches
The wounds in my bark;
Stars caught in my branches
Make day of the dark,
And are worshipped as suns till the sunrise shall tread out their fires as a spark.

Where dead ages hide under
The live roots of the tree,
In my darkness the thunder
Makes utterance of me;
In the clash of my boughs with each other ye hear the waves sound of the sea.

That noise is of Time,
As his feathers are spread
And his feet set to climb
Through the boughs overhead,
And my foliage rings round him and rustles, and branches are bent with his tread.

The storm-winds of ages
Blow through me and cease,
The war-wind that rages,
The spring-wind of peace,
Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses, ere one of my blossoms increase.

All sounds of all changes,
All shadows and lights
On the world's mountain-ranges
And stream-riven heights,
Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and language of storm-clouds on earth-shaking nights;

All forms of all faces,
All works of all hands
In unsearchable places
Of time-stricken lands,
All death and all life, and all reigns and all ruins, drop through me as sands.

Though sore be my burden
And more than ye know,
And my growth have no guerdon
But only to grow,
Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings above me or death-worms below.

These too have their part in me,
As I too in these;
Such fire is at heart in me,
Such sap is this tree's,
Which hath in it all sounds and all secrets of infinite lands and of seas.

In the spring-coloured hours
When my mind was as May's,
There brake forth of me flowers
By centuries of days,
Strong blossoms with perfume of manhood, shot out from my spirit as rays.

And the sound of them springing
And the smell of their shoots
Were as warmth and sweet singing
And strength to my roots;
And the lives of my children made perfect with freedom of soul were my fruits.

I bid you but be;
I have need not of prayer;
I have need of you free
As your mouths of mine air;
That my heart may be greater within me, beholding the fruits of me fair.

More fair than strange fruit is
Of faiths ye espouse;
In me only the root is
That blooms in your boughs;
Behold now your God that ye made you, to feed him with faith of your vows.

In the darkening and whitening
Abysses adored,
With dayspring and lightning
For lamp and for sword,
God thunders in heaven, and his angels are red with the wrath of the Lord.

O my sons, O too dutiful
Toward Gods not of me,
Was not I enough beautiful?
Was it hard to be free?
For behold, I am with you, am in you and of you; look forth now and see.

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
With miracles shod,
With the fires of his thunders
For raiment and rod,
God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white with the terror of God.

For his twilight is come on him,
His anguish is here;
And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
Grown grey from his fear;
And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last of his infinite year.

Thought made him and breaks him,
Truth slays and forgives;
But to you, as time takes him,
This new thing it gives,
Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom and lives.

For truth only is living,
Truth only is whole,
And the love of his giving
Man's polestar and pole;
Man, pulse of my centre, and fruit of my body, and seed of my soul.

One birth of my bosom;
One beam of mine eye;
One topmost blossom
That scales the sky;
Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I.

The Oblation

Ask nothing more of me, sweet;
All I can give you I give.
Heart of my heart, were it more
More would be laid at your feet:
Love that should help you to live,
Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give
Once to have sense of you more,
Touch you and taste of you, sweet,
Think you and breathe you and live,
Swept of your wings as they soar,
Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
Give you but love of you, sweet:
He that hath more, let him give;
He that hath wings, let him soar;
Mine is the heart at your feet
Here, that must love you to live.

From "Mater Triumphalis"

I do not bid thee spare me, O dreadful mother!
I pray thee that thou spare not, of thy grace.
How were it with me then, if ever another
Should come to stand before thee in this my place?

I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion
Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy breath;
The graves of souls born worms and creeds grown carrion
Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death.

Thou art the player whose organ-keys are thunders,
And I beneath thy foot the pedal prest;
Thou art the ray whereat the rent night sunders,
And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast.

I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,
As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line;
But thou from dawn to sunsetting shalt cherish
The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine.

Reared between night and noon and truth and error,
Each twilight-travelling bird that trills and screams
Sickens at midday, nor can face for terror
The imperious heaven's inevitable extremes.

I have no spirit of skill with equal fingers
At sign to sharpen or to slacken strings;
I keep no time of song with gold-perched singers
And chirp of linnets on the wrists of kings.

I am thy storm-thrush of the days that darken,
Thy petrel in the foam that bears thy bark
To port through night and tempest; if thou hearken,
My voice is in thy heaven before the lark.

My song is in the mist that hides thy morning,
My cry is up before the day for thee;
I have heard thee and beheld thee and give warning,
Before thy wheels divide the sky and sea.

Birds shall wake with thee voiced and feathered fairer,
To see in summer what I see in spring;
I have eyes and heart to endure thee, O thunder-bearer,
And they shall be who shall have tongues to sing.

I have love at least, and have not fear, and part not
From thine unnavigable and wingless way;
Thou tarriest, and I have not said thou art not,
Nor all thy night long have denied thy day.

Darkness to daylight shall lift up thy pæan,
Hill to hill thunder, vale cry back to vale,
With wind-notes as of eagles Æschylean,
And Sappho singing in the nightingale.

Sung to by mighty sons of dawn and daughters,
Of this night's songs thine ear shall keep but one;
That supreme song which shook the channelled waters,
And called thee skyward as God calls the sun.

Come, though all heaven again be fire above thee;
Though death before thee come to clear thy sky;
Let us but see in his thy face who love thee;
Yea, though thou slay us, arise and let us die.

Cor Cordium

O heart of hearts, the chalice of love's fire,
Hid round with flowers and all the bounty of bloom;
O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom
The lyrist Liberty made life a lyre;
O heavenly heart, at whose most dear desire
Dead Love, living and singing, cleft his tomb,
And with him risen and regent in death's room
All day thy choral pulses rang full choir;
O heart whose beating blood was running song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake strong,
Till very liberty make clean and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea.

From the Epilogue to "Songs before Sunrise"

As one that ere a June day rise
Makes seaward for the dawn, and tries
The water with delighted limbs
That taste the sweet dark sea, and swims
Right eastward under strengthening skies,
And sees the gradual rippling rims
Of waves whence day breaks blossom-wise
Take fire ere light peer well above,
And laughs from all his heart with love;

And softlier swimming with raised head
Feels the full flower of morning shed
  And fluent sunrise round him rolled
  That laps and laves his body bold
With fluctuant heaven in water's stead,
  And urgent through the growing gold
Strikes, and sees all the spray flash red,
  And his soul takes the sun, and yearns
  For joy wherewith the sea's heart burns;

So the soul seeking through the dark
Heavenward, a dove without an ark,
  Transcends the unnavigable sea
  Of years that wear out memory;
So calls, a sunward-singing lark,
  In the ear of souls that should be free;
So points them toward the sun for mark
  Who steer not for the stress of waves,
  And seek strange helmsmen, and are slaves.

For if the swimmer's eastward eye
Must see no sunrise—must put by
  The hope that lifted him and led
  Once, to have light about his head,
To see beneath the clear low sky
  The green foam-whitened wave wax red
And all the morning's banner fly—
  Then, as earth's helpless hopes go down,
  Let earth's self in the dark tides drown.

Yea, if no morning must behold
Man, other than were they now cold,
  And other deeds than past deeds done,
  Nor any near or far-off sun
Salute him risen and sunlike-souled,
  Free, boundless, fearless, perfect, one,
Let man's world die like worlds of old,
  And here in heaven's sight only be
  The sole sun on the worldless sea.

[From *Erechtheus*]

Chthonia to Athens

I lift up mine eyes from the skirts of the shadow,
  From the border of death to the limits of light;
O streams and rivers of mountain and meadow,
  That hallow the last of my sight,
O father that wast of my mother,
Cephisus, O thou too his brother
From the bloom of whose banks as a prey
Winds harried my sister away,
O crown on the world's head lying
  Too high for its waters to drown,
Take yet this one word of me dying—
  O city, O crown.

Though land-wind and sea-wind with mouths that blow slaughter
  Should gird them to battle against thee again,
New-born of the blood of a maiden thy daughter,
  The rage of their breath shall be vain.
For their strength shall be quenched and made idle,
And the foam of their mouths find a bridle,
And the height of their heads bow down
At the foot of the towers of the town.
Be blest and beloved as I love thee
  Of all that shall draw from thee breath;
Be thy life as the sun's is above thee;
  I go to my death.

[From *Poems and Ballads. Second Series*]

A Forsaken Garden

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
  At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
  The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
  The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
    Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
To the low last edge of the long lone land.
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the grey bare walls lain guestless,
Through branches and briers if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain.
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken—
These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not,
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
Did he whisper? "look forth from the flowers to the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
And men that love lightly may die—but we?"

And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end—but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again for ever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never
Who have left nought living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be;
Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

[From *Poems and Ballads. Third Series*]

From "Pan and Thalassius"

THALASSIUS

Pan!
Pan!
O sea-stray, seed of Apollo,
What word wouldst thou have with me?
My ways thou wast fain to follow
Or ever the years hailed thee
Man.

Now
If August brood on the valleys,
If satyrs laugh on the lawns,
What part in the wildwood alleys
Hast thou with the fleet-foot fauns—
Thou?

See!
Thy feet are a man's—not cloven
Like these, not light as a boy's:
The tresses and tendrils inwoven
That lure us, the lure of them cloys
Thee.

Us
The joy of the wild woods never
Leaves free of the thirst it slakes:
The wild love throbs in us ever
That burns in the dense hot brakes
Thus.

Life,
Eternal, passionate, aweless,
Insatiable, mutable, dear,
Makes all men's laws for us lawless:
We strive not: how should we fear
Strife?

We,
The birds and the bright winds know not
Such joys as are ours in the mild
Warm woodland; joys such as grow not
In waste green fields of the wild
Sea.

No;
Long since, in the world's wind veering,
Thy heart was estrangèd from me:
Sweet Echo shall yield thee not hearing:
What have we to do with thee?
Go.

A Reiver's Neck-Verse

Some die singing, and some die swinging,
And weel mot a' they be:
Some die playing, and some die praying,
And I wot sae winna we, my dear,
And I wot sae winna we.

Some die sailing, and some die wailing,
And some die fair and free:
Some die flyting, and some die fighting,
But I for a fause love's fee, my dear,
But I for a fause love's fee.

Some die laughing, and some die quaffing,
And some die high on tree:
Some die spinning, and some die sinning,
But faggot and fire for ye, my dear,
Faggot and fire for ye.

Some die weeping, and some die sleeping,
And some die under the sea:
Some die ganging, and some die hanging,
And a twine of a tow for me, my dear,
A twine of a tow for me.

[From *Tristram of Lyonesse*]

Prelude

Tristram and Iseult

Love, that is first and last of all things made,
The light that has the living world for shade,
The spirit that for temporal veil has on
The souls of all men woven in unison,
One fiery raiment with all lives inwrought
And lights of sunny and starry deed and thought,
And always through new act and passion new
Shines the divine same body and beauty through,
The body spiritual of fire and light
That is to worldly noon as noon to light;
Love, that is flesh upon the spirit of man
And spirit within the flesh whence breath began;
Love, that keeps all the choir of lives in chime;
Love, that is blood within the veins of time;
That wrought the whole world without stroke of hand,
Shaping the breadth of sea, the length of land,
And with the pulse and motion of his breath
Through the great heart of the earth strikes life and death,
The sweet twain chords that make the sweet tune live
Through day and night of things alternative,
Through silence and through sound of stress and strife,
And ebb and flow of dying death and life;
Love, that sounds loud or light in all men's ears,
Whence all men's eyes take fire from sparks of tears,
That binds on all men's feet or chains or wings;
Love, that is root and fruit of terrene things;
Love, that the whole world's waters shall not drown,
The whole world's fiery forces not burn down;
Love, that what time his own hands guard his head
The whole world's wrath and strength shall not strike dead;
Love, that if once his own hands make his grave
The whole world's pity and sorrow shall not save;
Love, that for very life shall not be sold,

Nor bought nor bound with iron nor with gold;
So strong that heaven, could love bid heaven farewell,
Would turn to fruitless and unflowering hell;
So sweet that hell, to hell could love be given,
Would turn to splendid and sonorous heaven;
Love that is fire within three and light above,
And lives by grace of nothing but of love;
Through many and lovely thoughts and much desire
Led these twain to the life of tears and fire;
Through many and lovely days and much delight
Led these twain to the lifeless life of night.

A Child's Laughter

All the bells of heaven may ring,
All the birds of heaven may sing,
All the wells on earth may spring,
All the winds on earth may bring
  All sweet sounds together;
Sweeter far than all things heard,
Hand of harper, tone of bird,
Sound of woods at sundawn stirred,
Welling water's winsome word,
  Wind in warm wan weather.

One thing yet there is, that none
Hearing ere its chime be done
Knows not well the sweetest one
Heard of man beneath the sun,
  Hoped in heaven hereafter;
Soft and strong and loud and light,
Very sound of very light
Heard from morning's rosiest height,
When the soul of all delight
  Fills a child's clear laughter.

Golden bells of welcome rolled
Never forth such notes, nor told

Hours so blithe in tones so bold,
As the radiant mouth of gold
  Here that rings forth heaven.
If the golden-crested wren
Were a nightingale—why, then,
Something seen and heard of men
Might be half as sweet as when
  Laughs a child of seven.

THOMAS EDWARD BROWN

[Born at Douglas in the Isle of Man on May 5, 1830. Took a Double First Class at Oxford, and became Fellow of Oriel. One of the original staff of masters at Clifton (from 1864), and on retiring in 1892 returned to the Isle of Man. Died suddenly at Clifton, October 29, 1897. Poems: *Betsy Lee, a Fo'c's'le Yarn*, 1873; *Fo'c's'le Yarns* (including *Betsy Lee* and others), 1881; *The Doctor and other Poems*, 1887; *The Manx Witch and other Poems*, 1889; *Kitty of the Sherragh Vane and The Schoolmasters*, 1891; *Old John and other Poems*, 1893; *Collected Poems*, 1900; *Select Poems* (*Golden Treasury* Series), 1908.]

The volume and range of Brown's poetry is so great that it is hard to do it justice within the limits of such a selection as this. In the illuminating essay prefixed by his friend Mr. H. F. Brown to the selection in the *Golden Treasury* Series it is well said that "in his spiritual moods Brown is constantly reminding us of George Herbert, Sir Thomas Browne, Wordsworth, Blake, yet it is one of the signatures of his genuineness as a poet that the note is never identical; it is always the note of Brown himself, in harmony—yes, but not in unison." That is eminently true of his lyrical and reflective poems, but these after all are small in bulk compared to the *Fo'c's'le Yarns* and other narrative poems, mainly in the Manx dialect, with which he first made his reputation. These are entirely his own and give him a distinctive place among our national poets.

The narrator in nearly all the tales is a fisherman, Tom Baynes, and many of the same characters recur. Brown used to say that he was himself Tom Baynes, and it is evident enough that through his lips, and in his racy speech, the poet was constantly giving utterance to his own ideas, though we may also detect the same unconsciously self-revealing note in his "Pazon Gale" (partly drawn from his own father) and in Doctor Bell. These two portraits from *The Doctor* are surely characteristic of Brown himself and of his attitude to his fellow men.

"Man to man—aye, that 's your size,
That 's the thing that 'll make you wise

That 's the plan that 'll carry the day—
Lovin' is understandin'—eh?
Lovin' is understandin'. Well,
He'd a lovin' ould heart, had Docthor Bell."

and

"The Pazon? Yes! aw, yes! well, maybe—
Aw, innocent! innocent as a baby,
And good and true; but, for all, a man
Is a man, and I don't know will you understan',
But you know there 's people's goin' that good
They haven't a smell for the steam of the blood
That 's in a man; or, if they have,
They houlds their noses, and makes belave
They hav'n'. But the Pazon—no!
True and kind; and the ebb and the flow
Of all men's hearts went through and through him—
The sweet ould man, if you'd only knew him!"

This note of human sympathy runs through all these tales of the tragedies and humours of love, and amid the almost boisterous flow of the narrative breaks out now and again into passages of the utmost tenderness. As to the manner of telling, with its rapid twists and turns, its constant asides, its scraps of dialogue, the reader who would appreciate it must let himself go as the writer does, and will then be amply rewarded. To some the dialect will always be a bar, but there is no doubt that it adds to the raciness and dramatic force of the impression. At any rate, for those impatient of dialect the two touching stories of *Mary Quayle* and *Bella Gorry*, told in ordinary English, will reveal something of the poet's narrative gift.

Even in the tales there are many indications of the poet's sympathy not only with man, but with Nature in all her moods, and of his faith, amid all questionings, in the Divine Love which controls the universe. These feelings, however, find more definite expression in the lyrics, of which some examples follow, while it is all but impossible here to give extracts from the narratives which would really do them justice.

As to the lyrics, on the deeper theme of man's relation to his Creator light is thrown by the remarkable dialogue entitled *Dartmoor*, in which the boldness of treatment does not mar its essen-

tial reverence. In *Aber Stations* we have the prolonged heart's cry of a father who has lost a little son, ending on a note of pious resignation. In *Old John* is given a charming portrait of an old Scotchman, touched with special sympathy by the fact that the writer "also had a root in Scottish ground" (Brown's mother was Scotch), and following it comes a companion portrait of a Manxman, *Chalse A. Killey*, full of tenderness and humour. In the delightful *Epistola ad Dakyns* we are told of "the three places" which had a special hold on the poet's heart, Clifton, Derwentwater, and his beloved Isle of Man. These, and the exquisite *Lynton Verses*, are, alas! too long to quote, though I would fain have found room for the *Symphony* which closes the last-named series; but no one who wishes to appreciate Brown's genius should forgo the pleasure of reading these and many more. Of the shorter lyrics I have done my best to give typical examples.

The poems as a whole reveal a man of strong personality, which found its readiest expression in poetry, for he seems to have been reserved in ordinary intercourse. Thus we are told by H. F. Brown that in his twenty-eight years at Clifton he left "a deep imprint on the school, but the inner man was withdrawn into the sacred recesses of his family affections, his long and solitary musings on the downs, and the steady accumulations of his poems, *about which I believe he seldom spoke*, though the calm and assurance with which he forged ahead clearly indicate that in literature lay his true life's work." He was eminently a scholar, with a deep love of the classics, and especially of Greek ("Ah, sir," he said once, "that Greek stuff *penetrates*"), and this is shown in the careful finish of many of his lyrics.

It was in his beloved island that he spent the last five years of his life, but it was perhaps a happy fate which brought it to a sudden close when on October 29, 1897, he was in the act of delivering one of those stimulating addresses to the boys at Clifton which his old colleagues and pupils so vividly remember. For fuller estimates of Brown's character and genius the reader is referred to W. E. Henley's Introduction to the *Complete Poems*, and to Mr. Horatio Brown's preface to the *Golden Treasury* selections.

GEORGE A. MACMILLAN.

Braddan Vicarage

I wonder if in that fair isle,
Some child is growing now, like me
When I was child: care-pricked, yet healed the while
With balm of rock and sea.

I wonder if the purple ring
That rises on a belt of blue
Provokes the little bashful thing
To guess what may ensue,
When he has pierced the screen, and holds the further clue.

I wonder if beyond the verge
He dim conjectures England's coast:
The land of Edwards and of Henries, scourge
Of insolent foemen, at the most
Faint caught where Cumbria looms a geographic ghost.

I wonder if to him the sycamore
Is full of green and tender light;
If the gnarled ash stands stunted at the door,
By salt sea-blast defrauded of its right;
If budding larches feed the hunger of his sight.

I wonder if to him the dewy globes
Like mercury nestle in the caper leaf;
If, when the white narcissus dons its robes,
It soothes his childish grief;
If silver plates the birch, gold rustles in the sheaf.

I wonder if to him the heath-clad mountain
With crimson pigment fills the sensuous cells;
If like full bubbles from an emerald fountain
Gorse-bloom luxuriant wells;
If God with trenchant forms the insolent lushness quells.

. . . . . .

I wonder if he loves that Captain bold
Who has the horny hand,
Who swears the mighty oath, who well can hold,
Half-drunk, serene command,
And guide his straining bark to refuge of the land.

I wonder if he thinks the world has aught
Of strong, or nobly wise,
Like him by whom the invisible land is caught
With instinct true, nor storms, nor midnight skies
Avert the settled aim, or daunt the keen emprise.

I wonder if he deems the English men
A higher type beyond his reach,
Imperial blood, by Heaven ordained with pen
And sword the populous world to teach;
If awed he hears the tones as of an alien speech;

. . . . . .

Ah! crude, undisciplined, when thou shalt know
What good is in this England, still of joys
The chiefest count it thou wast nurtured so
That thou may'st keep the larger equipoise,
And stand outside these nations and their noise.

Scarlett Rocks

I thought of life, the outer and the inner,
As I was walking by the sea:
How vague, unshapen this, and that, though thinner.
Yet hard and clear in its rigidity.
Then took I up the fragment of a shell,
And saw its accurate loveliness,
And searched its filmy lines, its pearly cell,
And all that keen contention to express
A finite thought. And then I recognised
God's working in the shell from root to rim,
And said:—"He works till He has realised—
O Heaven! if I could only work like Him!"

Clifton

I'm here at Clifton, grinding at the mill
  My feet for thrice nine barren years have trod;
But there are rocks and waves at Scarlett still,
  And gorse runs riot in Glen Chass—thank God!

Alert, I seek exactitude of rule,
  I step, and square my shoulders with the squad;
But there are blaeberries on old Barrule,
  And Langness has its heather still—thank God!

There is no silence here: the truculent quack
  Insists with acrid shriek my ears to prod,
And, if I stop them, fumes; but there 's no lack
  Of silence still on Carraghyn—thank God!

Pragmatic fibs surround my soul, and bate it
  With measured phrase, that asks the assenting nod;
I rise, and say the bitter thing, and hate it—
  But Wordsworth's castle 's still at Peel—thank God!

O broken life! O wretched bits of being,
  Unrhythmic, patched, the even and the odd!
But Bradda still has lichens worth the seeing,
  And thunder in her caves—thank God! thank God!

The Intercepted Salute

A little maiden met me in the lane,
And smiled a smile so very fain,
So full of trust and happiness,
I could not choose but bless
The child, that she should have such grace
To laugh into my face.

She never could have known me; but I thought
It was the common joy that wrought
Within the little creature's heart,
As who should say:—"Thou art

As I; the heaven is bright above us;
And there is God to love us.
And I am but a little gleeful maid,
And thou art big, and old, and staid;
But the blue hills have made thee mild
As is a little child.
Wherefore I laugh that thou may'st see—
O, laugh! O, laugh with me!"
A pretty challenge! Then I turned me round,
And straight the sober truth I found.
For I was not alone; behind me stood,
Beneath his load of wood,
He that of right the smile possessed—
Her father manifest.

O, blest be God! that such an overplus
Of joy is given to us:
That that sweet innocent
Gave me the gift she never meant,
A gift secure and permanent!
For, howsoe'er the smile had birth,
It is an added glory on the earth.

[From *Tommy Big-Eyes*]

BACH'S FUGUES

Fuge—dear heart!
What a start!
Well, obsarve! away goes a scrap,
Just a piece of a tune, like a little chap
That runs from his mammy; but mind the row
There 'll be about that chap just now!
Off he goes! but whether or not,
The mother is after him like a shot—
Run, you rascal, the fast you 're able!
But she nearly nabs him at the gable;
But missin' him after all: and then
He 'll give her the imperince of sin:

And he 'll duck and he 'll dive, and he 'll dodge and he 'll dip,
And he 'll make a run, and he 'll give her the slip,
And back again, and turnin' and mockin',
And imitatin' her most shockin',
Every way she 's movin', you know:
That 's just the way this tune 'll go;
Imitatin', changin', hidin',
Doublin' upon itself, dividin'
And other tunes comin' wantin' to dance with it,
But haven't the very smallest chance with it—
It 's that slippy and swivel—up, up, up!
Down, down, down! the little pup—
Friskin', whiskin'; and then as solemn,
Like marchin' in a double column,
Like a funeral: or, rather,
If you 'll think of this imp, it 's like the father
Comin' out to give it him, and his heavy feet
Soundin' like thunder on the street.
And he 's caught at last, and they all sing out
Like the very mischief, and dance and shout,
And caper away there most surprisin',
And ends in a terrible rejisin'.
That 's Backs, that 's fuges—aw, that 's fine—
But never mind! never mind!

[From *Clevedon Verses*]

Norton Wood (Dora's Birthday)

In Norton wood the sun was bright,
In Norton wood the air was light,
And meek anemonies,
Kissed by the April breeze,
Were trembling left and right.
Ah, vigorous year!
Ah, primrose dear
With smile so arch!
Ah, budding larch!
Ah, hyacinth so blue,
We also must make free with you!

Where are those cowslips hiding?
But we should not be chiding—
The ground is covered every inch—
What sayest, master finch?
I see you on the swaying bough!
And very neat you are, I vow!
And Dora says it is "the happiest day!"
Her birthday, hers!
And there 's a jay,
And from that clump of firs
Shoots a great pigeon, purple, blue, and gray.
And, coming home,
Well-laden, as we clomb
Sweet Walton hill,
A cuckoo shouted with a will—
"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" the first we've heard!
"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" God bless the bird!
Scarce time to take his breath,
And now "Cuckoo!" he saith—
Cuckoo! cuckoo! three cheers!
And let the welkin ring!
He has not folded wing
Since last he saw Algiers.

Ποιημάτιον

For J. P.

It was in pleasant Derbyshire,
Upon a bright spring day,
From a valley to a valley
I sought to find a way;
And I met a little lad,
A lad both blithe and bold;
And his eyes were of the blue,
And his hair was of the gold.
"Ho! little lad, of yonder point
The name come quickly tell!"
Then, prompt as any echo,
Came the answer:—"Tap o' th' hill."

"But has it any other name
That a man may say—as thus—
Kinderscout, or *Fairbrook Naze?*"
Then said the child, with constant gaze:—
"*Tap o' th' hill* it gets with us."

"Yes, yes!" I said, "but has it not
Some other name as well?
Its own, you know?" "Aye, aye?" he said,
"Tap o' th' hill! tap o' th' hill!"
"But your father, now? how calls it he?"
Then clear as is a bell
Rang out the merry laugh:—"Of course,
He calls it *Tap o' th' hill!*"
So I saw it was no use;
But I said within myself:—
"He has a wholesome doctrine,
This cheerful little elf."
And O, the weary knowledge!
And O, the hearts that swell!
And O, the blessed limit—
"Tap o' th' hill! tap o' th' hill!"

Boccaccio

Boccaccio, for you laughed all laughs that are—
The Cynic scoff, the chuckle of the churl,
The laugh that ripples over reefs of pearl,
The broad, the sly, the hugely jocular;
Men call you lewd, and coarse, allege you mar
The music that, withdrawn your ribald skirl,
Were sweet as note of mavis or of merle—
Wherefore they frown, and rate you at the bar.

One thing is proved: To count the sad degrees
Upon the Plague's dim dial, catch the tone
Of a great death that lies upon a land,
Feel nature's ties, yet hold with steadfast hand
The diamond, you are three that stand alone—
You, and Lucretius, and Thucydides.

O God, to Thee I Yield

O God, to Thee I yield
The gift Thou givest most precious, most divine!
Yet to what field
I must resign
His little feet
That wont to be so fleet,
I muse. O, joy to think
On what soft brink
Of flood he plucks the daffodils,
On what empurpled hills
He stands, Thy kiss all fresh upon his brow,
And wonders, if his father sees him now!

My Garden

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Ferned grot—
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

Specula

When He appoints to meet thee, go thou forth—
    It matters not
If south or north,
    Bleak waste or sunny plot.
Nor think, if haply He thou seek'st be late,
    He does thee wrong.

To stile or gate
Lean thou thy head, and long!
It may be that to spy thee He is mounting
Upon a tower,
Or in thy counting
Thou hast mista'en the hour.
But, if He come not, neither do thou go
Till Vesper chime.
Belike thou then shalt know
He hath been with thee all the time.

LORD DE TABLEY

[JOHN BYRNE LEICESTER WARREN was born at Tabley House, Cheshire, on April 26, 1835, and succeeded to his title in 1887. He was a distinguished bibliophil, numismatist, and botanist, being a leading authority on brambles. Always of secluded habits, he spent his later years in close retirement, and died at Ryde on November 22, 1895. His earlier books of poems were published under the names of G. F. Preston and William Lancaster, while *Philoctetes* (1866) had merely "M. A." on the title-page, with the not unnatural result that the poem was for a moment attributed to Matthew Arnold, greatly to the concern of de Tabley's modesty. *Rehearsals* (1870) and *Searching the Net* (1873) bore the poet's name, but it was not until 1893, when *Poems Dramatic and Lyrical* collected the best of his work, that he won anything like due public recognition. A second series with the same title appeared in 1895, and a posthumous collection, *Orpheus in Thrace* in 1901, was followed by *Collected Poems* in 1903.]

When we decide that a poet's station is in the second rank, it is well to remember that we cannot reasonably mean that his most distinguished qualities are in themselves of a secondary or inferior kind. If that were so, we should not in sanity spend any time on him at all. There can be no compromise with mediocrity in these matters; but mediocrity is not at all the same thing as clouded or congested excellence. Every poet who claims our consideration, not merely forcing a moment of unwilling attention, must do so by virtue of qualities that the greatest would be content to share with him. It is absurd to suppose that the purely poetic essence can be measured by degrees of goodness: that essential poetry may be good, and better, and best. The elements of poetry may be manifold, and a poet may be endowed with few or many of these, but in so far as he is possessed of any of them, he possesses them absolutely and not relatively. If he never achieves anything more than what might be called a fairly good lyric line, we are foolish to give him a thought; if he achieves one perfect lyric line, thereby winning from us one moment of rapt attention, and does no more, in that moment of achievement he stands worthily with the masters. The differ-

ence is that the great masters are able to exercise their essential poetic faculties much more continuously and freely than he; their song is not confounded by nearly so many distractions as his, nor subject to the same indiscretions, which are, as it were, external to the pure poetic impulse. In the master, the poetry is liberated more certainly and with more sustained splendour. The poet of the second rank habitually finds his poetic utterance in conflict with some alien force, and the result is that frequent clouding or congestion.

No more striking illustration of this fact could be well found than the work of Lord de Tabley. Of the essential elements of poetry there is scarcely one with which he was not richly, very richly, endowed. It was in no thin vein that poetry worked in his spirit; it flowed abundantly and was liberal of its many virtues. He perceived the world clearly and intensely as a poet, he was fortunate in a scholarship that quickened and mellowed his vision, he had an exquisitely inherited and trained manner, he had a great sense of diction and an almost phenomenal vocabulary, and his poetic temper was nobly sensitive to all thrilling and poignant beauty. And yet, for all his splendid qualities, his is not among the great names. In reading through his work, imposing in volume, there is scarcely a page that does not reward us with some notable excellence; scarcely one that does not force us to the opinion that never was there more exasperating genius. The poetry is disturbed in its movement by something over which it seems to have no dominion. As is generally the case, this disturbing factor is not constant, though with de Tabley it is commonly the product of one characteristic disability—a kind of intellectual inertia, a refusal, that in the light of his proved judgment and gifts must seem to be almost deliberate, to spend that last ounce of energy that must always go to the achievement of perfection, in poetry as in other things. From positive blemishes his work is remarkably free; indeed he may, in comparison with almost any poet of whom one can think, be said to be almost impeccable in this matter. Poor or false images such as—

> "Where our lips were merely noise
> Of babies wrangling with a sleepy man;"

and—

> "Mere-waves solid as a clod,
> Roar with skaters thunder-shod . . ."

are so rare in his work as to be startling when they are found, while *Sorrow Invincible* may be said to be his one entirely poor poem. The trouble is, rather, a too frequent failure of mere driving force. In the first place, six out of seven of his poems, even his short pieces, are too long, and this we always feel not to be due to a defective art or to lack of intellectual power, but just to intellectual drifting. Again, it is common enough to find single lines and phrases in the midst of excellent work that we are sure he could have bettered by a movement of the pen:

"The rose of youth upon your face,
My name upon your lips,
The rippling trees, the lonely place,
The sails of harbour ships . . ."

That is delightful, but who with any feeling for poetry does not ache to have been an imp in the poet's brain when that last line was written?

When, however, every deduction has been made on account of his general weakness,—and the penalty is a heavy one, depriving a poet, who we feel might so easily have secured them, of the highest honours—de Tabley remains a poet of great distinction, one whose place in the history of English poetry is secure. Of detailed felicities his work is full.

"My frown is like a winter house
Laid eastward in a bitter land . . ."

and—

"The vivid martin strikes the lake . . ."

and—

"Where in among the fleeces of the sheep,
Like small and burnished rooks, the starlings call . . ."

might be matched in nearly every poem he wrote. Mr. Gosse, in one of his kit-kat essays, has pointed to this wealth of beautiful detail as de Tabley's most striking achievement. While, however, it is in giving beauty to its parts that he is commonly successful, and in bringing his poem to a finely constructed and concentrated whole that he commonly fails, he must not be supposed to be entirely without this larger co-ordinating faculty. His two long dramas designed after a classic model, *Philoctetes* and *Orestes*, are both finely wrought poems, not only rich in admirable touches, but

in each case carried through on an ambitious plan to a memorable conclusion. Indeed, were it not that dramatic poetry lies outside the scope of this book, it would be pleasant to quote from the former play, which at moments—as, for example, when Philoctetes bids farewell to the Lemnians—reaches a nobility that can remind us of none but the greatest.

In his shorter poems one might perhaps wish that he turned less constantly for his subjects to classical mythology. Not that he handled these subjects ill; on the contrary, he moves here with his most assured ease. And yet the frequent remoteness of interest, the reiteration of established imagery, the evocation of an emotion from a literary memory rather than from direct experience, are apt to grow a little enervating. His poetry in this kind, though it would be folly to question its sincerity, loses some companionable quality. We remember then that de Tabley was a lonely and secluded man, and we feel that here is rather a lonely and secluded poetry. His poems of the English country-side, however, are quite another matter. He is one of the rare poets who can bring all the precision of a trained naturalist to the service of poetry, and with him the display of minute knowledge is as delightful as it commonly is tedious. He made successful experiments too, such as *The Sale at the Farm*, in a homely manner not altogether apt to his genius, and in one at least of his more whimsical moods he achieved, in the *Study of a Spider*, a masterpiece of its kind.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

SONNET

Rosy delight that changest day by day
From dearest growing to a dearer favour,
Whom Thought and Sinew, bondsmen to obey,
Slave out thy least command and may not waver.

My recompense and zenith of reward,
Bourn of all effort, thought behind all thinking,
Regent of sleep and centre of regard
Whereon the wakeful soul will pore unshrinking.

I cannot count the phases of this love,
Measure its growth or vindicate its reason.

I cannot doubt; the very smile that wove
My soul with love withholds me from love's treason.

I only know thou art my best delight,
Food of sweet thoughts and sum of all things bright.

Sonnet

My heart is vext with this fantastic fear,—
Had I been born too soon or far away,
Then had I never known thy beauty, dear,
And thou hadst spent on others all thy May.

The idle thought can freeze an idle brain
Faint at imagined loss of such dear prize;
I pore upon the slender chance again,
That taught me all the meaning of those eyes,

But creeps a whisper with a treason tongue—
Hadst never sunn'd beneath this maiden's glance
Another Love thou hadst as madly sung,
For Love is certain but the loved one chance.

Deject and doubtful thus I forge quaint fear,
But question little, Love, when thou art near.

Autumn Love

The autumn brought my love to me.
  The birds sing not in spring alone;
For fancy all the year is free
  To find a sweetness of its own:
And sallow woods and crystal morn
Were sweeter than the budded thorn.

When redwings peopled brake and down
  I kissed her mouth: in morning air
The rosy clover dried to brown
  Beneath thro' all its glowing square.
Around the bramble berries set
Their beaded globes intenser jet.

"True love," I whispered, "when I fold
To mine thy little lips so sweet,
The headland trembles into gold,
The sun goes up on firmer feet,
And drenched in glory one by one
The terrace clouds will melt and run.

Our lips are close as doves in nest;
And life in strength flows everywhere
In larger pulses through the breast
That breathe with thine a mutual air.
My nature almost shrinks to be
In this great moment's ecstasy.

"Lo, yonder myriad-tinted wood,
With all its phases golden-brown,
Lies calm; as if it understood
That in the flutter of thy gown
Abides a wonder more to me
Than lustrous leagues of forest sea.

"And far and deep we heard the sound
And low of pasture-going kine.
Your trembling lips spake not: I found
Their silence utterly divine.
Again the fluttering accents crept
Between them, failed, then how you wept!

"For when you came to speak the part
Which gave yourself for time and years,
The angel in the maiden heart
Could find no other speech but tears.
And their immortal language told
What Seraph's words to speak were cold.

"We turned our homeward feet at last,
And kissed to go, but kissed and stayed.
The dewy meadows where we past
Seemed love-full to each grass's blade.
And there our thirsty lips retold
That lovers' story ages old.

"They say we sear with growing time,
And scorn in age our young romance:
Yet shall that morning keep its prime
Thro' every earthly shock and chance:
And till my brain is dark with death,
No sweetness leaves that morning breath."

The Study of a Spider

From holy flower to holy flower
Thou weavest thine unhallowed bower
The harmless dewdrops, beaded thin,
Ripple along thy ropes of sin.
Thy house a grave, a gulf thy throne
Affright the fairies every one.
Thy winding-sheets are grey and fell,
Imprisoning with nets of hell
The lovely births that winnow by,
Winged sisters of the rainbow sky:
Elf-darlings, fluffy, bee-bright things,
And owl-white moths with mealy wings,
And tiny flies, as gauzy thin
As e'er were shut electrum in.
These are thy death spoils, insect ghoul,
With their dear life thy fangs are foul.
Thou felon anchorite of pain
Who sittest in a world of slain;
Hermit, who tunest song unsweet
To heaving wind and writhing feet;
A glutton of creation's sighs,
Miser of many miseries;
Toper, whose lonely feasting chair
Sways in inhospitable air.
The board is bare, the bloated host
Drinks to himself toast after toast.
His lip requires no goblet brink,
But like a weasel must he drink.
The vintage is as old as time
And bright as sunset, pressed and prime.

Ah, venom mouth and shaggy thighs
And paunch grown sleek with sacrifice,
Thy dolphin back and shoulders round
Coarse-hairy, as some goblin hound
Whom a hag rides to sabbath on,
While shuddering stars in fear grow wan.
Thou palace priest of treachery,
Thou type of selfish lechery,
I break the toils around thy head
And from their gibbets take thy dead.

A Leave-taking

Kneel not and leave me: mirth is in its grave.
  True friend, sweet words were ours, sweet words decay.
Believe, the perfume once this violet gave
  Lives—lives no more, though mute tears answer nay.
    Break off delay!

Dead, Love is dead! Ay, cancelled all his due.
  We say he mocks repose—we cannot tell—
Close up his eyes and crown his head with rue,
  Say in his ear, Sweet Love, farewell! farewell!
    A last low knell.

Forbear to move him. Peace, why should we stay?
  Go back no more to listen for his tread.
Resume our old calm face of every day:
  Not all our kneeling turns that sacred head
    Long dear, long dead!

Go with no tear-drop; Love has died before:
  Stay being foolish; being wise begone.
Let severed ways estrange thy weak heart more.
  Go, unregretful, and refrain thy moan.
    Depart alone.

Misrepresentation

Peace, there is nothing more for men to speak;
A larger wisdom than our lips' decrees.
Of that dumb mouth no longer reason seek,
No censure reaches that eternal peace,
And that immortal ease.

Believe them not that would disturb the end
With earth's invidious comment, idly meant.
Speak and have done thy evil; for my friend
Is gone beyond all human discontent,
And wisely went.

Say what you will and have your sneer and go.
You see the specks, we only heed the fruit
Of a great life, whose truth—men hate truth so—
No lukewarm age of compromise could suit.
Laugh and be mute!

GEORGE ELIOT

[MARY ANN EVANS, who wrote novels and poems under the name of George Eliot, was born in 1819 at Arbury Farm, Warwickshire, her father being a builder and estate agent. As a child and young girl she was chiefly remarkable for her passionate love of reading, and in the second degree, for her religious enthusiasm. Her first published writing was a religious poem which appeared in the *Christian Observer*, January, 1840. Her views became liberalized after her father's removal to Coventry in 1841, owing to her intimacy with the related families of Bray and Hennell, the heads of which were known as writers of rather heterodox books; and the result of this change of thought was her translation of Strauss's *Leben Jesu* (1846). A period of travel followed, and in 1851 Miss Evans came to London to act as assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*. This brought her into contact with many "advanced" literary people, and especially with G. H. Lewes, with whom, in 1854, she entered into marital relations which continued till his death, twenty-four years later, Lewes's domestic circumstances making a legal marriage impossible. Two years later, after long travel abroad, she wrote the first of her stories, and this, as all the world knows, was in due course followed by books which placed her at once in the front rank of English novelists. The curious thing is that the first period of George Eliot's immensely successful novels lasted less than seven years (*Adam Bede*, 1859; *Felix Holt*, 1866); and afterwards the author during the greater part of four years devoted herself to writing poems. She published *The Spanish Gypsy* in 1868, and in 1869 there followed *The Legend of Jubal*, which some years afterwards was issued in a volume with various miscellaneous poems. The second period of George Eliot's novels followed immediately; it included *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*, both of which met with amazing success. In 1878 G. H. Lewes died; in May, 1880, she married Mr. J. W. Cross, but died seven months later, on December 22, 1880.]

Leslie Stephen has put it on record that "neither critics nor general readers have been convinced that George Eliot was properly a poet, though she may be allowed to represent almost the highest excellence that can be attained in verse by one whose true strength lies elsewhere." The history of her first serious poem, *The Spanish Gypsy*, is a proof that verse composition did not come nat-

urally to her, for she found the difficulties immense, almost insuperable; after eight months' work she became "ill and very miserable;" and finally Lewes induced her to give up the poem and to turn back to prose. So *Felix Holt* was written and published (1865–6); but afterwards, as she told Frederic Harrison, she found it "impossible to abandon" the poem, though she, who had "never recast anything before," found it necessary to recast and alter, which she did most thoroughly. Originally it had been written as a five-act drama; the new version, which occupied her for a couple of years, was a hybrid affair, the dramatic scenes being oddly connected by long passages of narrative. The result is as though some commentator on Shakespeare or Sophocles were to run his notes into metrical form, and print them in the text, between the scenes. We need dwell no longer on *The Spanish Gypsy*, leaving it with the remark that it shows, as might be expected, much learning, and that it abounds in passages of sonorous rhetoric. A higher claim to purely poetic distinction is made by some of the miscellaneous verse that followed later, especially by *The Legend of Jubal* and some of the poems now bound up with it. They all want spontaneity; of a lyrical gift there are few signs; but to say that they are too much interfused with philosophy is only to say that they express the thoughts which, ever since she and George Lewes came together, possessed the author's mind. We quote some passages from *Jubal* and the well-known *O May I Join the Choir Invisible.*

The *Jubal* extracts embody really poetical visions, the former of the first consciousness of death in the primeval world, and the latter of one of the first dawnings of civilization; while the *Choir Invisible* is noteworthy both for the quality of the blank verse and for its concentrated and beautiful expression of some of the central beliefs of the author and of the thousands of minds with which she was in close intellectual sympathy.

EDITOR.

[From *The Legend of Jubal*]

THE THOUGHT OF DEATH

Death was now lord of Life, and at his word
Time, vague as air before, new terrors stirred,
With measured wing now audibly arose
Throbbing through all things to some unknown close.

Now glad Content by clutching Haste was torn,
And Work grew eager, and Device was born.
It seemed the light was never loved before,
Now each man said, "'Twill go and come no more."
No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,
No form, no shadow, but new dearness took
From the one thought that life must have an end;
And the last parting now began to send
Diffusive dread through love and wedded bliss,
Thrilling them into finer tenderness.
Then Memory disclosed her face divine,
That like the calm nocturnal lights doth shine
Within the soul, and shows the sacred graves,
And shows the presence that no sunlight craves,
No space, no warmth, but moves among them all;
Gone and yet here, and coming at each call,
With ready voice and eyes that understand,
And lips that ask a kiss, and dear responsive hand.

The Effect of Music

Then Jubal poured his triumph in a song—
The rapturous word that rapturous notes prolong
As radiance streams from smallest things that burn,
Or thought of loving into love doth turn.
And still his lyre gave companionship
In sense-taught concert as of lip with lip.
Alone amid the hills at first he tried
His wingèd song; then with adoring pride
And bridegroom's joy at leading forth his bride,
He said, "This wonder which my soul hath found,
This heart of music in the might of sound,
Shall forthwith be the share of all our race
And like the morning gladden common space:
The song shall spread and swell as rivers do,
And I will teach our youth with skill to woo
This living lyre, to know its secret will,
Its fine division of the good and ill.
So shall men call me sire of harmony,
And where great Song is, there my life shall be."

Thus glorying as a god beneficent,
Forth from his solitary joy he went
To bless mankind. It was at evening,
When shadows lengthen from each westward thing,
When imminence of change makes sense more fine
And light seems holier in its grand decline.
The fruit-trees wore their studded coronal,
Earth and her children were at festival,
Glowing as with one heart and one consent—
Thought, love, trees, rocks, in sweet warm radiance blent.

The tribe of Cain was resting on the ground,
The various ages wreathed in one broad round.
Here lay, while children peeped o'er his huge thighs,
The sinewy man embrowned by centuries:
Here the broad-bosomed mother of the strong
Looked, like Demeter, placid o'er the throng
Of young lithe forms whose rest was movement too—
Tricks, prattle, nods, and laughs that lightly flew,
And swayings as of flower-beds where Love blew.
For all had feasted well upon the flesh
Of juicy fruits, on nuts, and honey fresh,
And now their wine was health-bred merriment,
Which through the generations circling went,
Leaving none sad, for even father Cain
Smiled as a Titan might, despising pain.
Jubal sat climbed on by a playful ring
Of children, lambs and whelps, whose gambolling,
With tiny hoofs, paws, hands, and dimpled feet,
Made barks, bleats, laughs, in pretty hubbub meet.
But Tubal's hammer rang from far away,
Tubal alone would keep no holiday,
His furnace must not slack for any feast,
For of all hardship work he counted least;
He scorned all rest but sleep, where every dream
Made his repose more potent action seem.

Yet with health's nectar some strange thirst was blent,
The fateful growth, the unnamed discontent,
The inward shaping toward some unborn power,
Some deeper-breathing act, the being's flower.
After all gestures, words, and speech of eyes,

The soul had more to tell, and broke in sighs.
Then from the east, with glory on his head
Such as low-slanting beams on corn-waves spread,
Came Jubal with his lyre: there 'mid the throng,
Where the blank space was, poured a solemn song,
Touching his lyre to full harmonic throb
And measured pulse, with cadences that sob,
Exult and cry, and search the inmost deep
Where the dark sources of new passion sleep.
Joy took the air, and took each breathing soul,
Embracing them in one entrancèd whole,
Yet thrilled each varying frame to various ends,
As Spring new-waking through the creature sends
Or rage or tenderness; more plenteous life
Here breeding dread, and there a fiercer strife.
He who had lived through twice three centuries,
Whose months monotonous, like trees on trees
In hoary forests, stretched a backward maze,
Dreamed himself dimly through the travelled days
Till in clear light he paused, and felt the sun
That warmed him when he was a little one;
Felt that true heaven, the recovered past,
The dear small Known amid the Unknown vast,
And in that heaven wept. But younger limbs
Thrilled toward the future, that bright land which swims
In western glory, isles and streams and bays,
Where hidden pleasures float in golden haze.
And in all these the rhythmic influence,
Sweetly o'ercharging the delighted sense,
Flowed out in movements, little waves that spread
Enlarging, till in tidal union led
The youths and maidens both alike long-tressed,
By grace-inspiring melody possessed,
Rose in slow dance, with beauteous floating swerve
Of limbs and hair, and many a melting curve
Of ringèd feet swayed by each close-linked palm:
Then Jubal poured more rapture in his psalm,
The dance fired music, music fired the dance,
The glow diffusive lit each countenance,
Till all the gazing elders rose and stood
With glad yet awful shock of that mysterious good.

"O May I Join the Choir Invisible"

Longum illud tempus, quum non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum. —Cicero, *ad Att.* xii. 18.

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweer purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonized
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child,
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burthen of the world,
Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better—saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love—
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread for ever.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious

For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

1867.

SIR ALFRED LYALL

[Born 1835, of a family distinguished for its Indian services; educated at Eton and Haileybury; entered the Indian Civil Service, 1856; went through the Mutiny; rose rapidly, becoming ultimately Home Secretary 1873, Foreign Secretary 1878. Retired 1887, and lived in London till his death in 1911. Was Member of the India Council 1888–1902, and very prominent in intellectual society. Published *Verses written in India*, 1889, and afterwards two volumes of *Asiatic Studies*, dealing mainly with Oriental ideas on philosophy and religion.]

Though Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall's chief claim to remembrance, other than the deep impression that he has left in the minds of his many friends, lies in his brilliant Indian administration and his masterly essays on Eastern religions, his little volume of verse ought by no means to be forgotten. It stands alone by reason of its vivid expression of Indian thought, old and new, and of its deep insight into Indian character. In form, too, the poems are admirable, though some of those written between 1864 and 1870 are a little too Swinburnian in rhythm and some of the rhymes are such as to shock the critical ear. The two poems given below are alike concerned with that problem of the ultimate meaning of the world—of Life, Death and Destiny—on which Lyall's own mind, like that of his Indian mystics, was ever working. But, did space permit, it would be easy to show that he carried his researches and his meditations on this and kindred themes through other lands and other literatures. In *Joab Speaketh* we realize the doubts as to the justice of things which must have beset many a Hebrew warrior; in the charming story of *The Monk and the Bird* we have a mediæval assertion of faith rewarded; while in *Pilate's Wife's Dream* the poet gives us a picture of the longing of a Roman woman to be saved from "madness and magic," and to be free, once and for all, from the deep, perplexing, insoluble problems that were for ever vexing the soul of the East.

Editor.

Theology in Extremis:

Or a soliloquy that may have been delivered in India, June, 1857

"They would have spared life to any of their English prisoners who should consent to profess Mahometanism, by repeating the usual short formula; but only one half-caste cared to save himself in that way."—*Extract from an Indian newspaper.*

Morituru Loquitur

Oft in the pleasant summer years,
  Reading the tales of days bygone,
I have mused on the story of human tears,
  All that man unto man has done,
Massacre, torture, and black despair;
Reading it all in my easy-chair.

Passionate prayer for a minute's life;
  Tortured crying for death as rest;
Husband pleading for child or wife,
  Pitiless stroke upon tender breast.
Was it all real as that I lay there
Lazily stretched on my easy-chair?

Could I believe in those hard old times,
  Here in this safe luxurious age?
Were the horrors invented to season rhymes,
  Or truly is man so fierce in his rage?
What could I suffer, and what could I dare?
I, who was bred to that easy-chair.

They were my fathers, the men of yore,
  Little they recked of a cruel death;
They would dip their hands in a heretic's gore,
  They stood and burnt for a rule of faith.
What would I burn for, and whom not spare?
I, who had faith in an easy-chair.

Now do I see old tales are true,
  Here in the clutch of a savage foe;
Now shall I know what my fathers knew,
  Bodily anguish and bitter woe,
Naked and bound in the strong sun's glare,
Far from my civilized easy-chair.

Now have I tasted and understood
  That old world feeling of mortal hate;
For the eyes all round us are hot with blood;
  They will kill us coolly—they do but wait;
While I, I would sell ten lives, at least,
For one fair stroke at that devilish priest

Just in return for the kick he gave,
  Bidding me call on the prophet's name;
Even a dog by this may save
  Skin from the knife and soul from the flame;
My soul! if he can let the prophet burn it;
But life is sweet if a word may earn it.

A bullock's death, and at thirty years!
  Just one phrase, and a man gets off it;
Look at that mongrel clerk in his tears
  Whining aloud the name of the prophet;
Only a formula easy to patter,
And, God Almighty, what *can* it matter?

"Matter enough," will my comrade say
  Praying aloud here close at my side,
"Whether you mourn in despair alway,
  Cursed for ever by Christ denied;
Or whether you suffer a minute's pain
All the reward of Heaven to gain."

Not for a moment faltereth he,
  Sure of the promise and pardon of sin;
Thus did the martyrs die, I see,
  Little to lose and muckle to win;
Death means Heaven, he longs to receive it,
But what shall I do if I don't believe it?

Life is pleasant, and friends may be nigh,
  Fain would I speak one word and be spared;
Yet I could be silent and cheerfully die,
  If I were only sure God cared;
If I had faith, and were only certain
That light is behind that terrible curtain.

But what if He listeth nothing at all
  Of words a poor wretch in his terror may say?
That mighty God who created all
  To labour and live their appointed day;
Who stoops not either to bless or ban,
Weaving the woof of an endless plan.

He is the Reaper, and binds the sheaf,
  Shall not the season its order keep?
Can it be changed by a man's belief?
  Millions of harvests still to reap;
Will God reward, if I die for a creed,
Or will He but pity, and sow more seed?

Surely He pities who made the brain,
  When breaks that mirror of memories sweet,
When the hard blow falleth, and never again
  Nerve shall quiver nor pulse shall beat;
Bitter the vision of vanishing joys;
Surely He pities when man destroys.

Here stand I on the ocean's brink,
  Who hath brought news of the further shore?
How shall I cross it? Sail or sink,
  One thing is sure, I return no more;
Shall I find haven, or aye shall I be
Tossed in the depths of a shoreless sea?

They tell fair tales of a far-off land,
  Of love rekindled, of forms renewed;
There may I only touch one hand
  Here life's ruin will little be rued;
But the hand I have pressed and the voice I have heard,
To lose them for ever, and all for a word!

Now do I feel that my heart must break
  All for one glimpse of a woman's face;
Swiftly the slumbering memories wake
  Odour and shadow of hour and place;
One bright ray through the darkening past
Leaps from the lamp as it brightens last,

Showing me summer in western land
  Now, as the cool breeze murmureth
In leaf and flower—And here I stand
  In this plain all bare save the shadow of death;
Leaving my life in its full noonday,
And no one to know why I flung it away.

Why? Am I bidding for glory's roll?
  I shall be murdered and clean forgot;
Is it a bargain to save my soul?
God, whom I trust in, bargains not;
Yet for the honour of English race,
May I not live or endure disgrace.

Ay, but the word, if I could have said it,
  I by no terrors of hell perplext;
Hard to be silent and have no credit
  From man in this world, or reward in the next;
None to bear witness and reckon the cost
Of the name that is saved by the life that is lost.

I must be gone to the crowd untold
  Of men by the cause which they served unknown,
Who moulder in myriad graves of old;
  Never a story and never a stone
Tells of the martyrs who die like me,
Just for the pride of the old countree.

Meditations of a Hindu Prince

All the world over, I wonder, in lands that I never have trod,
Are the people eternally seeking for the signs and steps of a God?
Westward across the ocean, and Northward ayont the snow,
Do they all stand gazing, as ever, and what do the wisest know?

Here, in this mystical India, the deities hover and swarm
Like the wild bees heard in the tree-tops, or the gusts of a gathering storm;
In the air men hear their voices, their feet on the rocks are seen,
Yet we all say, "Whence is the message, and what may the wonders mean?"

A million shrines stand open, and ever the censer swings,
As they bow to a mystic symbol, or the figures of ancient kings;
And the incense rises ever, and rises the endless cry
Of those who are heavy laden, and of cowards loth to die.

For the Destiny drives us together, like deer in a pass of the hills,
Above is the sky, and around us the sound of the shot that kills;
Pushed by a Power we see not, and struck by a hand unknown,
We pray to the trees for shelter, and press our lips to a stone.

The trees wave a shadowy answer, and the rock frowns hollow and grim,
And the form and the nod of the demon are caught in the twilight dim;
And we look to the sunlight falling afar on the mountain crest,
Is there never a path runs upward to a refuge there and a rest?

The path, ah! who has shown it, and which is the faithful guide?
The haven, ah! who has known it? for steep is the mountainside,
Forever the shot strikes surely, and ever the wasted breath
Of the praying multitude rises, whose answer is only death.

Here are the tombs of my kinsfolk, the fruit of an ancient name,
Chiefs who were slain on the war-field, and women who died in flame;
They are gods, these kings of the foretime, they are spirits who guard our race,
Ever I watch and worship; they sit with a marble face.

And the myriad idols around me, and the legion of muttering priests,
The revels and rites unholy, the dark unspeakable feasts!
What have they wrong from the Silence? Hath even a whisper come
Of the secret, Whence and Whither? Alas! for the gods are dumb.

Shall I list to the word of the English, who come from the uttermost sea?
"The Secret, hath it been told you, and what is your message to me?"
It is nought but the wide-world story how the earth and the heavens began,
How the gods are glad and angry, and a Deity once was man.

I had thought, "Perchance in the cities where the rulers of India dwell,
Whose orders flash from the far land, who girdle the earth with a spell,
They have fathomed the depths we float on, or measured the unknown main"—
Sadly they turn from the venture, and say that the quest is vain.

Is life, then, a dream and delusion, and where shall the dreamer awake?
Is the world seen like shadows on water, and what if the mirror break?
Shall it pass as a camp that is struck, as a tent that is gathered and gone
From the sands that were lamp-lit at eve, and at morning are level and lone?

Is there nought in the heaven above, whence the hail and the levin are hurled,
But the wind that is swept around us by the rush of the rolling world?
The wind that shall scatter my ashes, and bear me to silence and sleep
With the dirge, and the sounds of lamenting, and voices of women who weep.

AH3

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

[Born at Bristol, 1840, of a family which had been distinguished in medicine for five generations. After a brilliant career at Oxford, he developed lung delicacy, which compelled him to live much in Italy and Switzerland, especially (after 1878) at Davos, in the company of R. L. Stevenson and other invalids of mark. For years he devoted his main studies to Italian history, and produced not only *The Renaissance of Italy* in many volumes but a number of shorter books and essays in prose. On these his reputation will chiefly rest; but in and after 1878 he also published, in addition to translations of Latin students' songs and Michael Angelo's sonnets, four books of original verse: *Many Moods*, 1878; *New and Old*, 1880; *Animi Figura*, 1882; and *Vagabunduli Libellus*, 1884. He died in Rome on April 19, 1893.]

To read much of Symonds's verse at a sitting is to be oppressed by a luxuriance that often runs to seed. His very facility, indeed, while it always gives his verse remarkable accomplishment, frequently leads him astray from the fine purposes of poetry, when he is content to describe the externalities of things, without exploring their sources. His work then, dazzling as it often is, becomes hard and slippery on the surface, and barren of the intimacy and precision which are the blood of poetry. In these moods—and they were not rare in his experience—he was the prey and not the master of words, and the seductiveness of a merely gorgeous verbal array confused his perception of the real nature of an image; as, for example—

> Upon the pictured walls amid the blaze
> Of carbuncle and turquoise, solid bosses
> Of diamonds, pearl engirt, shot fiery rays:
>
> Swan's down beneath, with parrot plumage, glosses
> Cedar-carved couches on the dais deep
> In bloom of asphodel and meadow mosses.
>
> Here languid men with pleasure tired may sleep:
> Here revellers may banquet in the sheen
> Of silver cressets: gourds and peaches heap

The citron tables; and a leafy screen,
This way and that with blossoms interlaced,
Winds through the hall in mazed alleys green.

This is striking virtuosity, but it is not the disciplined manner of poetry; it produces not an image in the mind, but a glittering confusion. It is, perhaps, in the shorter lyric, that searching test of a poet's quality, that Symonds most suffered from his lack of strict poetic control; in this manner the large and impressive if florid gesture of his more elaborate work is of little use to him, and he finds himself untutored to stricter economy of the imagination, and the result is that his short lyrics, with very few exceptions, lack all the sudden and glowing presentation of words that means distinction. His really imposing accomplishment, too, was subject to startling lapses, such as

Splits the throat
Of maenad multitudes with shrill sharp shrieks,

and his literary scholarship should have saved him from such an indiscretion as—

Pestilence-smitten multitudes, sere leaves
Driven by the dull remorseless autumn breath.

And yet, in spite of his verbal ceremoniousness, and a habit of mind that too often led him from simple and stirring imaginative thought into every deft kind of fancy, he is justly allowed the honor of representation among his country's poets. Not only had he great richness in description, which could be arresting when it was not unbridled, but there were moments when he wrote simply and with his eye on his object, as in *Harvest*, and the result gives him a place that we can only wish he had earned by a greater body of work of his best quality. There were other times when his very virtuosity reached such a pitch as to force something more than astonishment, as in *Le Jeune Homme caressant sa Chimère*, where he achieves a brilliance equalled by very few of his contemporaries. Yet better, he could now and again subject himself to real emotional truth, and express it with sustained if unequal directness, as in *Stella Maris*. This sonnet sequence is, I think, his best achievement as a poet. The pyschology may be a little uncertain, and the lover's attitude is sometimes (e. g. Sonnets 52 and 53) intolerable, but the sequence as a whole does give real and often beautiful

expression to a profound and passionate experience. There is here a spiritual intensity which Symonds generally missed, but by virtue of his having achieved it here and in one or two other places, he claims his place in the company of genuine poets.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

THE SHEPHERD TO THE EVENING STAR

Star of my soul, arise;
  Show forth thy silver shining!
For thee the sunset skies
  With love and light are pining:
The tents of evening spread for thee
Their rich and radiant canopy.

All day the tender lemon trees
  Above the pathway bending
Drooped their still boughs in odorous ease,
  Thine advent cool attending:
But now the little winds that blow
Sway their faint petals to and fro.

The dim mysterious avenues
  Of olives interwoven
Respire again, and drink the dews;
  And where their skirts are cloven,
Black funeral flames of cypresses
Shoot skyward from the purple seas.

My sheep and goats are housed: their bells
  Keep silence on the meadow;
And solitude hath spread the fells
  With her aërial shadow;
I scarce can hear a sound, or see
A single thing to hinder thee.

Come, star! Come, lover! Let me feel
  The wonder of thy kisses:
Breathe in my brain the thoughts that steal
  Through heaven's blue wildernesses:
But when the maiden moon is free,
Leave me to sleep and dream of thee!

Le Jeune Homme Caressant sa Chimère

(For an Intaglio)

A boy of eighteen years 'mid myrtle-boughs
Lying love-languid on a morn of May,
Watched half-asleep his goats insatiate browse
Thin shoots of thyme and lentisk, by the spray
Of biting sea-winds bitter made and grey:
Therewith when shadows fell, his waking thought
Of love into a wondrous dream was wrought.

A woman lay beside him,—so it seemed;
For on her marble shoulders, like a mist
Irradiate with tawny moonrise, gleamed
Thick silken tresses; her white woman's wrist,
Glittering with snaky gold and amethyst,
Upheld a dainty chin; and there beneath,
Her twin breasts shone like pinks that lilies wreathe.

What color were her eyes I cannot tell;
For as he gazed thereon, at times they darted
Dun rays like water in a dusky well;
Then turned to topaz: then like rubies smarted
With smouldering flames of passion tiger-hearted;
Then 'neath blue-veined lids swam soft and tender
With pleadings and shy timorous surrender.

Thus far a woman: but the breath that lifted
Her panting breast with long melodious sighs,
Stirred o'er her neck and hair broad wings that sifted
The perfumes of meridian Paradise;
Dusk were they, furred like velvet, gemmed with eyes
Of such dull lustre as in isles afar
Night-flying moths spread to the summer star.

Music these pinions made—a sound and surge
Of pines innumerous near lisping waves—
Rustlings of reeds and rushes on the verge
Of level lakes and naiad-haunted caves—
Drowned whispers of a wandering stream that laves
Deep alder-boughs and tracts of ferny grass
Bordered with azure-belled campanulas.

Potent they were: for never since her birth
With feet of woman this fair siren pressed
Sleek meadow swards or stony ways of earth;
But 'neath the silken marvel of her breast,
Displayed in sinuous length of coil and crest,
Glittered a serpent's tail, fold over fold,
In massy labyrinths of languor rolled.

Ah me! what fascination! what faint stars
Of emerald and opal, with the shine
Of rubies intermingled, and dim bars
Of twisting turquoise and pale coraline!
What rings and rounds! what thin streaks sapphirine
Freckled that gleaming glory, like the bed
Of Eden streams with gems enamelled!

There lurked no loathing, no soul-freezing fear,
But luxury and love these coils between:
Faint grew the boy; the siren filled his ear
With singing sweet as when the village green
Re-echoes to the tinkling tambourine,
And feet of girls aglow with laughter glance
In myriad mazy errors of the dance.

How long he dallied with delusive joy
I know not: but thereafter never more
The peace of passionless slumber soothed the boy;
For he was stricken to the very core
With sickness of desire exceeding sore,
And through the radiance of his eyes there shone
Consuming fire too fierce to gaze upon.

He, ere he died—and they whom lips divine
Have touched, fade flower-like and cease to be—
Bade Charicles on agate carve a sign
Of his strange slumber: therefore can we see
Here in the ruddy gem's transparency
The boy, the myrtle-boughs, the triple spell
Of moth and snake and white witch terrible.

In the Inn at Berchtesgaden

Child with the gentle tired eyes
And pallid cheek and faint wan smile,
I love your courteous shy replies
And soft persuasive ways, the while
On day-long tedious service bent
You bear our whims and discontent.

For hard it is to please alway
The hundred guests who come and go,
To see fresh faces every day,
And hear the same unchanging flow
Of hasty words that wants express
And idle wishes numberless.

I marvel not your lips are wan,
And soft and languid every limb,
And faint as dawn the blush upon
Those cheeks so delicate and dim;
For like a flower that pines away,
You fade for light and air and play.

I would that I could bear you hence
Afar to field, or hill, or wood,
To watch new life in every sense
Expand with free and pulsing blood,
To see your eyes with pleasure glow,
And hear your laughter fresh and low.

That cannot be: but day by day
Life brings you nothing new or bright:
The bloom of boyhood dies away;
And youth, unsunned by youth's delight,
Yields place to manhood tame and drear—
Blank year succeeding to blank year.

Κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων

Give freely to the friend thou hast;
  Unto thyself thou givest:
On barren soil thou canst not cast,
  For by his life thou livest.

Nay, this alone doth trouble me—
  That I should still be giving
Through him unto myself, when he
  Is love within me living.

I fain would give to him alone,
  Nor let him guess the giver;
Like dews that drop on hills unknown,
  To feed a lordly river.

Harvest

The west is purple, and a golden globe,
  Sphered with new-risen moonlight, hangs between
The skirts of evening's amethystine robe
  And the round world bathed in the steady sheen.
  There bending o'er a sickle bright and keen,
Rests from his long day's labour one whose eyes
Are fixed upon the large and luminous skies.

An earnest man he seems, with yellow hair,
  And yellow 'neath his scythe-sweep are the sheaves;
Much need hath he to waste the nights with care,
  Lest waking he should hear from dripping eaves
  The plash of rain, or hail among thin leaves,
Or melancholy wailings of a wind,
That lays broad field and furrow waste behind:

Much need hath he the live-long day to toil,
  Sweeping the golden granaries of the plain,
Until he garner all the summer's spoil,
  And store his gaping barns with heavy grain;

Then will he sleep, nor heed the plash of rain,
But with gay wassail and glad winter cheer
Steel a stout heart against the coming year.

[From *Stella Maris*]

THREE SONNETS—I

Rebuke me not! I have nor wish nor skill
To alter one hair's breadth in all this house
Of Love, rising with domes so luminous
And air-built galleries on life's topmost hill!
Only I know that fate, chance, years that kill,
Change that transmutes, have aimed their darts at us;
Envying each lovely shrine and amorous
Reared on earth's soil by man's too passionate will.
Dread thou the moment when these glittering towers,
These adamantine walls and gates of gems,
Shall fade like forms of sun-forsaken cloud;
When dulled by imperceptible chill hours,
The golden spires of our Jerusalems
Shall melt to mist and vanish in night's shroud!

II

Silvery mosquito-curtains draped the bed:
A lamp stood on the table; but its light
Startled no whit the drowsy wings of night,
Nor had the mystery of darkness fled.
She slumbered not: flawless from foot to head;
Fair ivory body clothed in fairest white;
No bar between her beauty and my sight:
Silence and storm-throes on our souls were shed.
Storm in the flakes of refluent hair that fret
Those brows imperious; in the smouldering fire
Of clear blue eyes love's tear-dews never wet;
Scorn frozen on firm lips, and petulant ire
Ready to leap from that marmoreal breast.
How awful was this motionless unrest!

III

And then she rose; and rising, then she knelt;
And then she paced the floor with passionate tread;
And then she sank with that imperial head
Bowed on bare knees: her broad arms made a belt
To clasp them; dark rebellious hair was shed
In tempest o'er fixed ardent eyes which dwelt,
Searching my heart's heart; yea, my manhood felt
From that tense huddled form intensest dread.
Nerves quaked; veins curdled; thin compulsive flame
Thrilled through her crouching flesh to my couched soul
Expectant; lingering minutes winged with blame
Swept over us with voiceless thunder-roll,
While the vast silence of the midnight stole,
Merging our sin, a shuddering sea of shame!

JE SUIS TROP JEUNE

Leave me awhile; I am too young to love;
My maiden fancies are enough for me:
Leave me awhile; too soon will passion move
The silent springs of my virginity.
You break my dream, wither my girlhood's flower,
With vows and kisses and soft whispered sighs;
And offer what? The homage of an hour,
The sad sweet service of adoring eyes.
And then you fly. 'Tis honor bids you go:
You think it virtue to have left me maid;
You smile "Uncropped by me her rose shall blow,
Her bridal kiss on worthier lips be laid."
But give me, stranger, give me back, I pray,
The heart's ease that was mine but yesterday!

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

[Born in the Azores, 1833; educated at Cheltenham and Woolwich. Went to Australia, 1853. Published *Sea Spray* (1867) and *Bush Ballads* (1870). Died by his own hand in that year.]

Adam Lindsay Gordon was the son of that Captain Adam Durnford Gordon who, having served well in India, became ultimately Professor of Hindustani in Cheltenham College, where the boy went for a time; he was afterwards at Woolwich, but obtained no commission. He seems to have spent much of his time with boxers and horse-trainers. In 1853 he was sent out to Australia; a poem written to his sister shows that he knew that he went in disgrace, but that his "stubborn pride" did not quail before the future. The poem *Whisperings in Wattle-boughs*, here printed, shows that in his exile he was often tormented by remorseful thoughts of those he had left behind. In Australia he entered the Police as a constable; he stayed in the force two years, making a name meanwhile as a steeplechase rider. After 1855 he became famous in that capacity, but in 1862 he married one Maggie Park, who had nursed him after a fall; in 1864 he inherited £7,000 and entered the South Australian Parliament, till having spent his money he retired and opened a livery stable at Ballarat. The mysterious thing about him is that during his riotous youth, and during these ten years among horses and horsemen in Australia, he picked up a good knowledge of Latin, Greek, and French literature. The next five years were divided between steeplechasing and poetry; in one day at Melbourne (1868) he won three races, and just about the same time he wrote his *Song of Autumn* and *The Sick Stockrider*. Then in an evil day he laid claim to a great estate (Esslemont) in Scotland, believing himself to be head of his branch of the Gordon family. In June, 1870, he learnt that his application had failed; he was pressed for money, and he had not recovered from the effects of a bad fall. So he sent to the press his volume of *Bush Ballads* and quietly shot himself. Unfortunately, too, a friend obeyed too literally the instructions in a letter from Gordon, and burnt a whole trunkful of his manuscripts, verse and prose; so that all that remains of his writing is the two small

volumes which, in the country that he had made his own, gained and kept for him the name and fame of the Australian Poet. A book on *Adam Lindsay Gordon and his Friends* has been written by Mr. Douglas Sladen, who has also issued the *Poems* in a little volume (Constable & Co., 1912).

Gordon's literary models were Byron and, after 1865, Swinburne; but his extraordinary verbal memory enabled him to remember by heart whole pages of other poets, from Horace to Macaulay and Browning. Yet none can call him an imitator, except perhaps of Swinburne. His miscellaneous poems and songs are original, though the feeling they express is common to many in all lands. His bush poems and his riding verses are the free and spirited outcome of his own experience, and form an unrivalled picture of the Australia of fifty years ago, and of the passions and interests that animated the makers of a new country.

EDITOR.

THE SICK STOCKRIDER

Hold hard, Ned! Lift me down once more, and lay me in the shade
Old man, you 've had your work cut out to guide
Both horses, and to hold me in the saddle when I swayed,
All through the hot, slow, sleepy, silent ride.

The dawn at "Moorabinda" was a mist-rack dull and dense,
The sunrise was a sullen, sluggish lamp;
I was dozing in the gateway at Arbuthnot's bound'ry fence,
I was dreaming on the Limestone cattle camp.

We crossed the creek at Carricksford, and sharply through the haze,
And suddenly the sun shot flaming forth;
To southward lay "Katâwa," with the sandpeaks all ablaze,
And the flushed fields of Glen Lomond lay to north.

Now westward winds the bridle-path that leads to Lindisfarm,
And yonder looms the double-headed Bluff;
From the far side of the first hill, when the skies are clear and calm
You can see Sylvester's woolshed fair enough.

Five miles we used to call it from our homestead to the place
  Where the big tree spans the roadway like an arch;
'Twas here we ran the dingo down that gave us such a chase
  Eight years ago—or was it nine?—last March.

'Twas merry in the glowing morn, among the gleaming grass,
  To wander as we 've wandered many a mile,
And blow the cool tobacco cloud, and watch the white wreaths pass,
  Sitting loosely in the saddle all the while.

'Twas merry 'mid the blackwoods, when we spied the station roofs,
  To wheel the wild scrub cattle at the yard,
With a running fire of stockwhips and a fiery run of hoofs;
  Oh! the hardest day was never then too hard!

Aye! we had a glorious gallop after "Starlight" and his gang,
  When they bolted from Sylvester's on the flat;
How the sun-dried reed-beds crackled, how the flint-strewn ranges rang
  To the strokes of "Mountaineer" and "Acrobat."

Hard behind them in the timber, harder still across the heath,
  Close beside them through the tea-tree scrub we dashed;
And the golden-tinted fern leaves, how they rustled underneath!
  And the honeysuckle osiers, how they crashed!

We led the hunt throughout, Ned, on the chestnut and the grey,
  And the troopers were three hundred yards behind,
While we emptied our six-shooters on the bushrangers at bay,
  In the creek with stunted box-tree for a blind!

There you grappled with the leader, man to man and horse to horse,
  And you rolled together when the chestnut reared;
He blazed away and missed you in that shallow watercourse—
  A narrow shave—his powder singed your beard!

In these hours when life is ebbing, how those days when life was young
Come back to us; how clearly I recall
Even the yarns Jack Hall invented, and the songs Jem Roper sung;
And where are now Jem Roper and Jack Hall?

Aye! nearly all our comrades of the old colonial school,
Our ancient boon companions, Ned, are gone;
Hard livers for the most part, somewhat reckless as a rule,
It seems that you and I are left alone.

There was Hughes, who got in trouble through that business with the cards,
It matters little what became of him;
But a steer ripped up MacPherson in the Cooraminta yards,
And Sullivan was drowned at Sink-or-swim;

And Mostyn—poor Frank Mostyn—died at last a fearful wreck,
In "the horrors," at the Upper Wandinong,
And Carisbrooke, the rider, at the Horsefall broke his neck,
Faith! the wonder was he saved his neck so long!

Ah! those days and nights we squandered at the Logans' in the glen—
The Logans, man and wife, have long been dead.
Elsie's tallest girl seems taller than your little Elsie then;
And Ethel is a woman grown and wed.

I've had my share of pastime, and I've done my share of toil,
And life is short—the longest life a span;
I care not now to tarry for the corn or for the oil,
Or for the wine that maketh glad the heart of man.

For good undone and gifts misspent and resolutions vain,
'Tis somewhat late to trouble. This I know—
I should live the same life over, if I had to live again;
And the chances are I go where most men go.

The deep blue skies wax dusky, and the tall green trees grow dim,
The sward beneath me seems to heave and fall;
And sickly, smoky shadows through the sleepy sunlight swim,
And on the very sun's face weave their pall.

Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave,
With never stone or rail to fence my bed;
Should the sturdy station children pull the bush flowers on my grave,
I may chance to hear them romping overhead.

How we Beat the Favourite

A lay of the Loamshire Hunt Cup

"Aye, squire," said Stevens, "they back him at evens;
The race is all over, bar shouting, they say;
The Clown ought to beat her; Dick Neville is sweeter
Than ever—he swears he can win all the way.

"A gentleman rider—well, I'm an outsider,
But if he 's a gent who the mischief 's a jock?
You swells mostly blunder, Dick rides for the plunder,
He rides, too, like thunder—he sits like a rock.

"He calls 'hunted fairly' a horse that has barely
Been stripped for a trot within sight of the hounds,
A horse that at Warwick beat Birdlime and Yorick,
And gave Abdelkader at Aintree nine pounds.

"They say we have no test to warrant a protest;
Dick rides for a lord and stands in with a steward;
The light of their faces they show him—his case is
Prejudged and his verdict already secured.

"But none can outlast her, and few travel faster,
She strides in her work clean away from The Drag;
You hold her and sit her, she couldn't be fitter,
Whenever you hit her she 'll spring like a stag.

"And perhaps the green jacket, at odds though they back it,
May fall, or there 's no knowing what may turn up.
The mare is quite ready, sit still and ride steady,
Keep cool; and I think you may just win the Cup."

Dark-brown with tan muzzle, just stripped for the tussle,
Stood Iseult, arching her neck to the curb,
A lean head and fiery, strong quarters and wiry,
A loin rather light, but a shoulder superb.

Some parting injunction, bestowed with great unction,
I tried to recall, but forgot like a dunce,
When Reginald Murray, full tilt on White Surrey,
Came down in a hurry to start us at once.

"Keep back in the yellow! Come up on Othello!
Hold hard on the chestnut! Turn round on The Drag!
Keep back there on Spartan! Back you, sir, in tartan!
So, steady there, easy," and down went the flag.

We started, and Kerr made strong running on Mermaid,
Through furrows that led to the first stake-and-bound,
The crack, half extended, looked bloodlike and splendid,
Held wide on the right where the headland was sound.

I pulled hard to baffle her rush with the snaffle,
Before her two-thirds of the field got away,
All through the wet pasture where floods of the last year
Still loitered, they clotted my crimson with clay.

The fourth fence, a wattle, floored Monk and Bluebottle;
The Drag came to grief at the blackthorn and ditch,
The rails toppled over Redoubt and Red Rover,
The lane stopped Lycurgus and Leicestershire Witch.

She passed like an arrow Kildare and Cock Sparrow,
And Mantrap and Mermaid refused the stone wall;
And Giles on The Greyling came down at the paling,
And I was left sailing in front of them all.

I took them a burster, nor eased her nor nursed her
Until the Black Bullfinch led into the plough,
And through the strong bramble we bored with a scramble—
My cap was knocked off by the hazel-tree bough.

Where furrows looked lighter I drew the rein tighter—
  Her dark chest all dappled with flakes of white foam,
Her flanks mud-bespattered, a weak rail she shattered—
  We landed on turf with our heads turned for home.

Then crashed a low binder, and then close behind her
  The sward to the strokes of the favourite shook;
His rush roused her mettle, yet ever so little
  She shortened her stride as we raced at the brook.

She rose when I hit her. I saw the stream glitter,
  A wide scarlet nostril flashed close to my knee,
Between sky and water The Clown came and caught her
  The space that he cleared was a caution to see.

And forcing the running, discarding all cunning,
  A length to the front went the rider in green;
A long strip of stubble, and then the big double,
  Two stiff flights of rails with a quickset between.

She raced at the rasper, I felt my knees grasp her,
  I found my hands give to her strain on the bit,
She rose when The Clown did—our silks as we bounded
  Brushed lightly, our stirrups clashed loud as we lit.

A rise steeply sloping, a fence with stone coping—
  The last—we diverged round the base of the hill;
His path was the nearer, his leap was the clearer,
  I flogged up the straight, and he led sitting still.

She came to his quarter, and on still I brought her,
  And up to his girth, to his breast-plate she drew;
A short prayer from Neville just reach'd me, "The Devil,"
  He muttered—locked level the hurdles we flew.

A hum of hoarse cheering, a dense crowd careering,
  All sights seen obscurely, all shouts vaguely heard;
"The green wins!" "The crimson!" The multitude swims on,
  And figures are blended and features are blurred.

"The horse is her master!" "The green forges past her!"
"The Clown will outlast her!" "The Clown wins!" "The Clown!"
The white railing races with all the white faces,
The chestnut outpaces, outstretches the brown.

On still past the gateway she strains in the straightway,
Still struggles, "The Clown by a short neck at most,"
He swerves, the green scourges, the stand rocks and surges,
And flashes, and verges, and flits the white post.

Aye! so ends the tussle,—I knew the tan muzzle
Was first, though the ring-men were yelling "Dead heat!"
A nose I could swear by, but Clarke said "The mare by
A short head." And that 's how the favourite was beat.

Whisperings in Wattle-boughs

Oh, gaily sings the bird! and the wattle-boughs are stirred
And rustled by the scented breath of spring;
Oh, the dreary wistful longing! Oh, the faces that are thronging!
Oh, the voices that are vaguely whispering!

Oh, tell me, father mine, ere the good ship crossed the brine,
On the gangway one mute handgrip we exchanged,
Do you, past the grave, employ, for your stubborn, reckless boy,
Those petitions that in life were ne'er estranged?

Oh, tell me, sister dear—parting word and parting tear
Never passed between us; let me bear the blame—
Are you living, girl, or dead? bitter tears since then I 've shed
For the lips that lisped with mine a mother's name.

Oh, tell me, ancient friend, ever ready to defend
In our boyhood, at the base of life's long hill,
Are you waking yet or sleeping? have you left this vale of weeping?
Or do you, like your comrade, linger still?

Oh, whisper, buried love, is there rest and peace above?—
  There is little hope or comfort here below;
On your sweet face lies the mould, and your bed is straight and
    cold—
  Near the harbour where the sea-tides ebb and flow.

* * * * * * * *

All silent—they are dumb—and the breezes go and come
  With an apathy that mocks at man's distress;
Laugh, scoffer, while you may! I could bow me down and pray
  For an answer that might stay my bitterness.

Oh, harshly screams the bird, and the wattle-bloom is stirred;
  There 's a sullen, weird-like whisper in the bough:
"Aye, kneel and pray and weep, but HIS BELOVED SLEEP
  CAN NEVER BE DISTURBED BY SUCH AS THOU!"

A61

FREDERIC WILLIAM HENRY MYERS

[Born at Keswick on February 6, 1843, his father being a Keswick clergyman and his mother a Marshall of Hallsteads. He had a distinguished career at Cheltenham and at Cambridge, where he won no less than six University prizes and was second in the first class both of the Classical and the Moral Sciences Tripos; won a reputation as a critic; and became a leader of the psychical research movement. He died in Rome on January 17, 1901. His *Saint Paul* (1867), an unsuccessful prize poem, was followed by *Poems* (1870) and *The Renewal of Youth* (1882).]

A great deal of human emotion, that is of real and urgent significance, is vague, and in nearly every heart escapes all attempts at the solace of definition. For example, most people know at moments the instinct for some unrealizable self-identification with natural phenomena. While, however, the existence and force of this kind of emotion is unquestionable, no poet can hope to achieve anything in his art until he understands that nebulous feeling, however real it may be, is a thing that words are wholly incapable of expressing. Good poets have sometimes in their apprenticeship, before they have considered wisely the functions of their art, indulged the fallacy that leads to such writing as—

> "I yearn towards the sunset
> In the magic of the twilight,
> And the radiance of the heavens
> Fills my soul with throbbing beauty . . .

but unless a man recovers from the error in his very green days, he forfeits any hope of poetic distinction. For to write thus is not to express mysterious and subtle emotion, but to lose oneself in an unintelligible foam of words. The poet, indeed, must by no means ignore this particular sort of emotional experience; it is far too universal and profound a thing for that. But it is his business to realize its essential value and to translate that precise value into an image that is capable of exact and vivid, or poetical, definition in words. It is failure to perceive this fundamental and invariable necessity of the art that is the cause of nearly all the bad poetry in the world.

A great deal of the work of Frederic Myers, a poet of many gifts, suffers from this failure, though his fine classical scholarship ought to have saved him. His most famous and still popular poem, *Saint Paul*, has metrical interest, though the form in itself is apt to combine with Myers's mental method to throw an emotional haze over the work. Here and there are figures of comparatively sharp definition, as in the passage here given, though a characteristic vagueness in the poem makes it difficult for us to do more than feel that here is a fine spiritual fervour, but that our perception of it is incomplete because of the lack of precision in the poet's statement. Many of Myers's other poems are touched by the same defect, but his real singing quality carries him happily through shorter pieces—such as that general favourite, *Simmenthal*—often enough to give him permanently something at least of the fame that was so widely his in his own day. With secondary poetic qualities he was well equipped; he had an earnest curiousity about life, wide and liberal knowledge, a sensitive and individual rhythmical gift, considerable grace of style, and spiritual dignity; and when he was visited by the clearer poetic mood, and was not misled by his too volatile imagination, these fine natural gifts were ready to the service of his inspiration, and he wrote shapely verse, infused at its best with a generous temper and real tenderness, and now and again moving with great delicacy, as in the subtle arrangement of the last line of—

> "Across the ocean, swift and soon,
> This faded petal goes,
> To her who is herself as June,
> And lovely, and a rose."

JOHN DRINKWATER.

FROM "SAINT PAUL"

Oft shall that flesh imperil and outweary
Soul that would stay it in the straiter scope.
Oft shall the chill day and the even dreary
Force on my heart the frenzy of a hope:—

Lo, as some ship, outworn and overladen,
Strains for the harbour where her sails are furled;—
Lo, as some innocent and eager maiden
Leans o'er the wistful limit of the world,

Dreams of the glow and glory of the distance,
Wonderful wooing and the grace of tears,
Dreams with what eyes and what a sweet insistence
Lovers are waiting in the hidden years;—

Lo, as some venturer, from his stars receiving
Promise and presage of sublime emprise,
Wears evermore the seal of his believing
Deep in the dark of solitary eyes;

Yea, to the end, in palace or in prison,
Fashions his fancies of the realm to be,
Fallen from the height or from the deeps arisen,
Ringed with the rocks and sundered of the sea;—

So even I, and with a pang more thrilling,
So even I, and with a hope more sweet,
Yearn for the sign, O Christ! of thy fulfilling,
Faint for the flaming of thine advent feet.

SIMMENTHAL

Far off the old snows ever new
With silver edges cleft the blue
Aloft, alone, divine;
The sunny meadows silent slept,
Silence the sombre armies kept,
The vanguard of the pine.

In that thin air the birds are still,
No ringdove murmurs on the hill
Nor mating cushat calls;
But gay cicalas singing sprang,
And waters from the forest sang
The song of waterfalls.

O Fate! a few enchanted hours
Beneath the firs, among the flowers,
High on the lawn we lay,
Then turned again, contented well,
While bright about us flamed and fell
The rapture of the day.

And softly with a guileless awe
Beyond the purple lake she saw
The embattled summits glow;
She saw the glories melt in one,
The round moon rise, while yet the sun
Was rosy on the snow.

Then like a newly singing bird
The child's soul in her bosom stirred;
I know not what she sung:—
Because the soft wind caught her hair,
Because the golden moon was fair,
Because her heart was young.

I would her sweet soul ever may
Look thus from those glad eyes and grey,
Unfearing, undefiled:
I love her; when her face I see,
Her simple presence wakes in me
The imperishable child.

Arethusa

O gentle rushing of the stainless stream,
Haunt of that maiden's dream!
O beech and sycamore, whose branches made
Her dear ancestral shade!
I call you praying; for she felt your power
In many an inward hour;
To many a wild despairing mood ye gave
Some help to heal or save,
And sang to heavenlier trances, long and long,
Your world-old undersong.
Now therefore, if ye may, one moment show
One look of long ago;
Create from waving sprays and tender dew
Her soft fair form anew;
From deepening azure of those August skies
Relume her ardent eyes!

Or if there may not from your sunlit aisle
Be born one flying smile,—
In all your multitudinous music heard
One whisper of one word,—
Then wrap me, forest, with thy blowing breath
In sleep, in peace, in death;
Bear me, swift stream, with immemorial stir,
To love, to God, to her.

HESIONE

In silence slept the mossy ground,
Forgetting bird and breeze;
In towering silence slept around
The Spanish chestnut-trees;
Their trailing blossom, feathery-fair,
Made heavy sweetness in the air.

All night she pondered, long and long,
Alone with lake and lawn;
She heard a soft untimely song,
But slept before the dawn:
When eyes no more can wake and weep,
A pensive wisdom comes with sleep.

"O love," she said, "O man of men,
O passionate and true!
Not once in all these years again
As once we did we do;
What need the dreadful end to tell?
We know it and we knew it well.

"O love," she said, "O king of kings,
My master and my joy,
Are we too young for bitter things
Who still are girl and boy?
Too young we won, we cherish yet
That dolorous treasure of regret."

Then while so late the heavens delayed
The solemn trance to break,
Her sad desiring eyes were stayed
Beyond the lucid lake;
She saw the grey-blue mountains stand,
Great guardians of the charmèd land.

Above her brows she wove and wound
Her gold Hellenic hair;
She stood like one whom kings have crowned
And God has fashioned fair;—
So sweet on wakened eyes will gleam
The flying phantom of a dream.

Or so, inarched in veiling vine,
The Syran priestess sees
Those amethystine straits enshrine
The sleeping Cyclades;
For Delos' height is purple still,
The old unshaken holy hill.

"O love," she said, "tho' sin be sin,
And woe be bitter woe,
Short-lived the hearts they house within,
And they like those will go;—
The primal Beauty, first and fair,
Is evermore and everywhere.

"And when the faint and fading star
In early skies is sweet,
In silence thither from afar
Thy heart and mine shall meet;
Deep seas our winged desire shall know,
And lovely summer, lovely snow.

"And whensoever bards shall sing—
However saints shall pray—
Whatever sweet and happy thing
The painter brings to-day,—
Their heavenly souls in heaven shall be,
And thou with these, and I with thee.

"And God,"—she said, and hushed a while,
"And God,"—but, half begun,
Thro' tears serener than a smile,
Her song beheld the sun:—
When souls no more can dream and pray,
Celestial hope will dawn with day.

Gabrielle

O scarlet berries sunny-bright!
O lake alone and fair!
O castle roaring in the night
With blown Bohemian air!
O spirit-haunted forest, tell
The hidden heart of Gabrielle!

Ah, the superb and virgin face!
Ah once again to see
Transparent through the Austrian grace
The English purity!
To hear the English speech that fell
So soft and sweet from Gabrielle!

So best, but if it be not so
Yet am I well content
To think that all things yonder grow
Stately and innocent;
To dream of woods that whisper well,
And light, and peace, and Gabrielle.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

[Born on August 13, 1850, in London. He was the son of the physician and dramatist J. Westland Marston. Blindness in boyhood was followed by a life of misfortune; he lost his mother, his betrothed, his dearly loved and devoted sister, and his closest friend, Oliver Madox Brown, in bewildering and rapid succession. He met these and yet later disasters—one friend following another, so that scarcely one survived his own short life—with unfailing courage, but he looked pathetically enough for the death which came on February 14, 1887. His published poems were *Song-tide*, 1871; *All in All*, 1875; *Wind Voices*, 1883; *Garden Secrets*, 1887.]

As was inevitable with men who, endowed with great energy, instead of being engaged as it were in some morning adventure of the world looked back regretfully to a long-past age of clean beauty across a civilization that had violated all in life that they cherished, there was in the temper of the Pre-Raphaelite poets a deep strain of wistfulness which is rarely found in great poetry, and is a different thing from the tragic intensity that is found there commonly enough. Even Keats, whose work is as poignant as that of any poet, leaves us with the impression that in creation, even the creation of tragic beauty, he was possessed entirely with the artist's joy, while in reading the great Pre-Raphaelites we feel always, touching all their splendid exuberance, a tremulous sadness: some touch of inescapable regret. The individual genius of Rossetti, Swinburne, Morris, was more than equal to disciplining this plaintiveness until it became no more than an added loveliness in their work, which remained positive and quick with assertion. With lesser poets, however, authentic though they were, who came under this same influence, made more intimate by the example of these masters themselves, there was a likelihood of this plaintiveness becoming over-insistent; and this is what happened, until the poetic emotion became diluted, the values of life were lowered a little, and there developed the delicate and fragrant but slightly insignificant decadent poetry of the nineties. Philip Marston was one of the most notable of the poets with whom this group began, and although in him poetry kept its high dignity, and it was not until a little later that it became fashionable to

write of life as a pack of cards or a Chinese lantern, the over-prevalence of plaintiveness is already clearly marked in his verse. It is not that his work is the reflection of a life that was almost epic in its sorrows. Marston was afflicted with a wrath that was terrible as some visitation of the Old Testament, but while remorseless personal misfortune emphasized the natural attitude to life which he inherited from his masters, it could not produce the precise quality of which we speak in his poetry. This was, rather, the product of an imagination that was never quite of the highest intensity. His lamentable life, indeed, far from inevitably influencing his work in this manner, might have touched it to a magnificent though profound gloom, as such misfortune has done with other poets. But it is as though his griefs had struck beyond his happiness and had impaired his poetic energy, so that he was unable fully to control, as the greater poets of his time controlled, an emotion that in its place may even be admirable in poetry, but which, out of its place, makes for enervation. And it is exactly in this way that Marston's work suffered. His natural gifts were fine ones, and he cultivated them with splendid devotion. To the expression of an extremely delicate susceptibility and sometimes of a thrilling passion, he brought a just and varied sense of word-values and an artistic discretion that rarely failed him, so that his work is hardly ever without a distinct and personal beauty. But, also, it is hardly ever bracing, and poetry, even in its forlorn moods, should brace. This same central infirmity kept him, in most of his poems, from achieving those radiant touches, living in the use of a word or the turn of a syllable, half chance and almost remote from reason, that so often makes the difference between a poem in which it is difficult or impossible to find a flaw, and one that is of manifest excellence. This is strikingly so in most of Marston's sonnets, of which he wrote a large number. In reading through them we find great technical sureness; more than that, we are constantly aware of a fine poetic temper, that keeps us securely above any feeling of tediousness, and we gladly allow a sweet musical movement. But it is only very rarely that we are stirred to the delighted admiration that greets those fortunate strokes that are a poet's chief glory. We feel constantly that Marston, charming poet as he was, was within a phrase of being a first-rate one.

His best poems are certain of the sonnets and a few voluptuously passionate love-poems in which he attained an intensity

that was far more admirable and of far more durable worth than the rather trivial prettiness of *The Rose and the Wind* and the other *Garden Fancies* through which the anthologies have made him most generally known. There is, too, a grave beauty in *The Old Churchyard of Bonchurch* and such lyrics as *From Far* that shows with what poetic dignity his spirit could work when most truly moved.

JOHN DRINKWATER.

INSEPARABLE

When I and thou are dead, my dear,
The earth above us lain,
When we no more in autumn hear
The fall of leaves and rain,
Or round the snow-enshrouded year
The midnight winds complain;

When we no more in green mid-spring,
Its sights and sounds may mind;
The warm wet leaves set quivering
With touches of the wind,
The birds at morn, and birds that sing
When day is left behind;

When over all the moonlight lies,
Intensely bright and still;
When some meandering brooklet sighs,
At parting from its hill;
And scents from voiceless gardens rise,
The peaceful air to fill;

When we no more through summer light
The deep, dim woods discern,
Nor hear the nightingales at night,
In vehement singing, yearn
To stars and moon, that, dumb and bright,
In nightly vigil burn;

When smiles, and hopes, and joys, and fears,
And words that lovers say,
And sighs of love, and passionate tears
Are lost to us for aye,

What thing of all our love appears,
In cold and coffin'd clay?

When all their kisses, sweet and close,
Our lips shall quite forget;
When, where the day upon us rose,
The day shall rise and set,
While we for love's sublime repose
Shall have not one regret;—

Oh, this true comfort is, I think,
That, be death near or far,
When we have crossed the fatal brink,
And found nor moon nor star—
To know not, when in death we sink,
The lifeless things we are.

Yet one thought is, I deem, more kind,
That when we sleep so well,
On memories that we leave behind,
When kindred spirits dwell,
My name to thine in words they'll bind
Of love inseparable.

Persistent Music

Lo! what am I, my heart, that I should dare
To love her, who will never love again?
I, standing out here in the wind and rain,
With feet unsandalled, and uncovered hair,
Singing sad words to a still sadder air,
Who know not even if my song's refrain—
"Of sorrow, sorrow! loved, oh, loved in vain!"—
May reach her where she sits and hath no care.

But I will sing in every man's despite;
Yea, too, and love, and sing of love until
My music mixes with her dreams at night;
That when Death says to me, "Lie down, be still!"
She, pausing for my voice, and list'ning long,
May know its silence sadder than its song.

The First Kiss

She sat where he had left her all alone,
  With head bent back, and eyes through love on flame,
  And neck half flushed with most delicious shame,
With hair disordered, and with loosened zone;
She sat, and to herself made tender moan,
  As yet again in thought her lover came,
  And caught her by her hands and called her name,
And sealed her body as her soul his own.

The June moon-stricken twilight, warm, and fair,
  Closed round her where she sat 'neath voiceless trees,
Full of the wonder of triumphant prayer,
  And sense of unimagined ecstasies
Which must be hers, she knows, yet knows not why;
But feels thereof his kiss the prophecy.

Bridal Eve

Half robed, with gold hair drooped o'er shoulders white,
  She sits as one entranced, with eyes that gaze
  Upon the mirrored beauties of her face;
And through the distances of dark and light
She hears faint music of the coming night;
  She hears the murmurs of receding days;
  Her future life is veiled in such a haze
As hides, on sultry morns, the sun from sight.

Upon the brink of imminent change she stands,
  Glad, yet afraid to look beyond the verge;
She starts, as at the touch of unseen hands;
  Love's music grows half anthem and half dirge.
Strange sounds and shadows round her spirit fall,
Yet to herself she stranger seems than all.

The Old Churchyard of Bonchurch

(This old churchyard has been for many years slipping toward the sea, which it is expected will ultimately engulf it)

The churchyard leans to the sea with its dead—
It leans to the sea with its dead so long.
Do they hear, I wonder, the first bird's song,
When the winter's anger is all but fled,
The high, sweet voice of the west wind,
The fall of the warm, soft rain,
When the second month of the year
Puts heart in the earth again?

Do they hear, through the glad April weather,
The green grasses waving above them?
Do they think there are none left to love them,
They have lain for so long there, together?
Do they hear the note of the cuckoo,
The cry of gulls on the wing,
The laughter of winds and waters,
The feet of the dancing Spring?

Do they feel the old land slipping seaward,
The old land, with its hills and its graves,
As they gradually slide to the waves
With the wind blowing on them from leeward?
Do they know of the change that awaits them,
The sepulchre vast and strange?
Do they long for days to go over,
And bring that miraculous change?

Or they love, perhaps, their night with no moonlight,
With no starlight, no dawn to its gloom,
And they sigh—"'Neath the snow, or the bloom
Of the wild things that wave from our night,
We are warm, through winter and summer;
We hear the winds blow, and say—
'The storm-wind blows over our heads,
But we, here, are out of its way.'"

Do they mumble low, one to another,
With a sense that the waters that thunder
Shall ingather them all, draw them under,
"Ah! how long to our moving, brother?
How long shall we quietly rest here,
In graves of darkness and ease?
The waves, even now, may be on us,
To draw us down under the seas!"

Do they think 'twill be cold when the waters
That they love not, that neither can love them,
Shall eternally thunder above them?
Have they dread of the sea's shining daughters,
That people the bright sea-regions
And play with the young sea-kings?
Have they dread of their cold embraces,
And dread of all strange sea-things?

But their dread or their joy—it is bootless:
They shall pass from the breast of their mother;
They shall lie low, dead brother by brother,
In a place that is radiant and fruitless,
And the folk that sail over their heads
In violent weather
Shall come down to them, haply, and all
They shall lie there, together.

From Far

"O Love, come back, across the weary way
Thou wentest yesterday—
Dear Love, come back!"

"I am too far upon my way to turn:
Be silent, hearts that yearn
Upon my track."

"O Love! Love! Love! sweet Love, we are undone,
If thou indeed be gone
Where lost things are."

"Beyond the extremest sea's waste light and noise,
As from Ghost-land, my voice
Is borne afar."

"O Love, what was our sin, that we should be
Forsaken thus by thee?
So hard a lot!"

"Upon your hearts my hands and lips were set—
My lips of fire—and yet,
Ye knew me not."

"Nay, surely, Love! We knew thee well, sweet Love!
Did we not breathe and move
Within thy light?"

"Ye did reject my thorns who wore my roses;
Now darkness closes
Upon your sight."

"O Love! stern Love! be not implacable.
We loved thee, Love, so well!
Come back to us."

"To whom, and where, and by what weary way
That I went yesterday,
Shall I come thus?"

"O weep, weep, weep! for Love, who tarried long
With many a kiss and song,
Has taken wing.

"No more he lightens in our eyes like fire;
He heeds not our desire,
Or songs we sing."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

[Born at 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, on November 30, 1850: the only child of Thomas Stevenson, civil engineer, and his wife Margaret Isabella, youngest daughter of the Rev. James Balfour of Colinton. His father, who with two elder brothers, David and Alan, conducted the business of harbour and lighthouse engineers founded by their distinguished father, Robert Stevenson, destined him from the first for the family profession. But weak health and a strong bias of nature foiled this purpose and directed him to the career of letters. His education was irregular, at private schools, at the Edinburgh Academy, under private tutors, and at the University of Edinburgh. For twenty years after 1873, in spite of nervous, arterial, and pulmonary troubles, he plied nearly every known mode of the literary art. Partly from ill health and partly from choice, he was much of a traveller. The order of the main incidents of his life as a writer is as follows:—1874–9: lived chiefly at Edinburgh, with occasional visits to London and long sojourns at Barbizon, Grez, and Paris: published *The Inland Voyage*, *Travels with a Donkey*, *Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes*, and *New Arabian Nights*.—1879–80: travelled to and returned from California, where he was married to Mrs. Fanny van de Grift Osbourne.—1880–4: passed two summers in Scotland and two winters at Davos, a few months at Marseilles, and a year at Hyères: published *Treasure Island*, *Virginibus Puerisque*, *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, and *The Silverado Squatters*.—1884–7: settled at Bournemouth, living invalid life: published *A Child's Garden of Verses*, *Prince Otto*, *The Dynamiters*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Kidnapped*, *The Merry Men*, *Underwoods*, and *Memories and Portraits:* wrote plays in collaboration with W. E. Henley.—1887–90: sailed with his family to America; wintered at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks; starting from San Francisco in the spring of 1888, took three successive ocean voyages among the Pacific Islands: published *Ballads*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, and *Letter to the Rev. Doctor Hyde*.—1890–4: built and settled at "Vailima," island of Upolu, Samoa: published *In the South Seas*, *The Wrecker*, *A Footnote to History*, *Island Nights' Entertainments*, *Catriona*, *Across the Plains*, *The Ebb-Tide*. Died suddenly December 4, 1894.—*Songs of Travel* and the unfinished novels *Weir of Hermiston* and *St. Ives* were published posthumously.]

"Poetry," wrote Walter Savage Landor, "was always my amusement, prose my study and business." Much the same

thing might truly have been said of that very different personage, Robert Louis Stevenson. He once wrote of himself that he was "a poetical character with a prose talent." There was no time in his literary life when the chief part of his industry and effort was not given to prose: there was no time when he was not also accustomed occasionally to write verse. And though it was the preponderance and excellence of his work in prose that chiefly won and holds for him his place in literature, yet the charm and power of his spirit are to be felt scarcely less in the relatively small and unassuming body of his poetry. He wrote in verse generally when he was too tired to write in prose, and almost always from one of two impulses: either to give direct expression to personal moods and affections or else to exercise himself in the technical practice of this or that poetic form. The two impulses sometimes, of course, worked together to a single result: but as a rule the stronger the pressure of the immediate feeling that moved him, the simpler, more traditional and ready to hand was the form he chose for expressing it. Although an acute and interested student of poetic forms and measures, he was, with one or two exceptions presently to be noted, no great metrical innovator on his own account. Neither did he consider that he had a right to be regarded as a lyrical or "singing" poet at all. In a letter written to Mr. John Addington Symonds not long after the publication of his volume *Underwoods*, he defined with his usual modesty his own view of his poetical status and affinities: "I wonder if you saw my book of verses? It went into a second edition, because of my name, I suppose, and its *prose* merits. I do not set up to be a poet. Only an all-round literary man: a man who talks, not one who sings. But I believe the very fact that it was only speech served the book with the public. Horace is much a speaker, and see how popular! most of Martial is only speech, and I cannot conceive a person who does not love his Martial; most of Burns also. Excuse this little apology for my house; but I don't like to come before people who have a note of song, and let it be supposed I do not know the difference."

A man writes verses at eighteen if ever, and at that age Stevenson records that he was busy with a tragedy of *Semiramis* in imitation of Webster and a series of sentimental putpourings of his own which he called *Voces Fidelium*. Neither of these ever saw the light. When he first came in touch with literary circles five years later, his mind seemed concentrated on the single en-

deavour of achieving a prose style that should match and truly express the vividness of his perceptions and imaginings, and poetry seemed hardly to be in his thoughts at all. But I believe he was already beginning to try his hand at some of those pieces in the Lothian vernacular which were afterwards published in *Underwoods*, and of which two are included in the present selection, as well as at confessions and meditations in various modes of English verse.

A couple of years later again, when Stevenson began to frequent the Fontainebleau region, we find him for a while much taken up with the study of Charles d'Orléans and with the attempt, then in fashion among his friends, to imitate in English the Old French forms of *ballade*, *rondeau*, *triolet*, &c. His letters at this time were apt to contain experiments of this kind, sometimes, like his translation of *Nous n'irons plus au bois*, as happy in execution as deep and sincere in feeling. While he was absent, to the anxious concern of his friends, on his marriage expedition to California in 1879, and suffering with high courage much illness and privation, he sometimes cast into unstudied but deeply felt verse the emotions of the time: to this period belong the lines beginning "Not yet, my soul, these friendly fields desert," as well as the famous *Requiem*, perhaps his best known utterance in verse.

During the six invalid years on the Continent or in England that followed, the tale of such occasional poems, composed in self-confession or as addresses to friends, continued to grow, but he showed no signs of intending to publish them. Occasionally there came a metrical experiment, like the set of alcaics addressed to Mr. Horatio Brown at Davos and beginning "Brave lads in olden musical centuries," perhaps the second-best achievement of this pattern in our literature after Tennyson's ode to Milton. Once at the same place the tragic death of a friend's son drew from him those consolatory stanzas *In Memoriam F. A. S.*, which have since comforted so many stricken hearts and of which the rhythm and cadence are at once so personal and so moving. But as a rule he preferred to employ the most familiar vehicles, especially the four-stressed couplet or blank verse,—a blank verse of no very studied or complicated structure, perhaps more resembling that of Landor in his occasional and complimentary pieces than any other model.

It was during Stevenson's stay at Hyères in 1883–4 that his friends became aware of a new departure he was beginning to

make in verse. He took to sending home, first in batches and then in sheaves, sets of nursery verses reviving, with a fidelity and freshness unparalleled, the feelings and fancies, the doings and beings, of an imaginative child; the child being of course truly himself. "Penny Whistles" was his name for them: and after returning to England and settling at Bournemouth in 1884 he gathered them into a volume under the new title *A Child's Garden of Verses*. This was his first published book of verse. Partly for that reason, partly because of the period of life with which they deal, I have put specimens from it at the head of the following selections.

Having once thus come before the public as a writer of verse, he next gathered together what he thought the pick of his occasional and experimental efforts both in English and in Scots, and published them in a volume of which he borrowed the title, *Underwoods*, from Ben Jonson. In the English portion of the book many of his private affections and experiences, and some of his thoughts and observations as a traveller, are recorded in no such strain of brilliant and high-wrought craftsmanship as he maintains in his prose, but for the most part in modes which attract and satisfy by a certain quiet, companionable grace and unobtrusive distinction of their own. The attempt to revive the measures and the dialect of Burns, and yet not to be a slavish imitator of his spirit, has been a stumbling-block to almost all who have ventured on it: but here, too, Stevenson's personality has strength enough to assert itself through a wide range of mood, from the satire, smiling but not without its sting, of *A Lowden Sabbath Morn* to the heartfelt recollections of *Ille Terrarum*. Of this section of Stevenson's work two short contrasted examples will be found below.

When in 1887 Stevenson left England once more, and as it turned out for good and all, he carried with him both the habit of throwing his immediate personal emotions into simple and heartfelt occasional verse and that of trying his hand deliberately at new styles and measures. This time his new technical experiments were in the ballad form. The first, *Ticonderoga*, a tale of Highland second-sight during the American War of Independence, was written at the Adirondacks at the beginning of winter, 1887. During the eighteen months of seafaring in the Pacific archipelagos which followed, he took an intense interest in the native island populations and their traditions, partly because of resem-

blances he found between them and those of the Scottish Highlands, and wrote two long and vigorous ballads in a swinging six-beat and triple-time measure on subjects of island history, *Rahero* and *The Feast of Famine*. It is no doubt due to the remoteness of the scenes, names, and manners, as well as to the fact that prose narrative, not verse, was what his public were used to expect from him, that these ballads have had less success than almost any of his writings. When in 1890 they were reprinted in a volume, he included with them two others more familiar in theme, the Galloway story of *Heather Ale*, and the English one, told with fine spirit in the first person, *Christmas at Sea:* as a specimen of his narrative poetry I have chosen this last.

Meanwhile the growth of Stevenson's mind and deepening of his character, together with his sense of exile—voluntary, but exile none the less—from old scenes and friendships, seemed to give every year a richer and fuller note to the occasional meditations or addresses to his friends in verse which he continued to send home. The more remote and solitary the island haunt from whence he wrote, the more poignant seemed his recollections of Scotland or of London; and once at any rate, in the verses *To S. R. Crockett* given below, he showed a touch of something like metrical genius in his manner of taking over a phrase from a prose dedication and turning it into verse of a new and very moving rhythm. After his sudden death at Vailima in December, 1894, a volume, partly prepared by himself, of these later occasional verses, together with some of earlier date that had not previously been collected, was published under the title *Songs of Travel*. From this volume our concluding specimens are taken.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

WINDY NIGHTS[1]

Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet
A man goes riding by
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

[1] This and the following selections from Stevenson are reprinted by permission from "Poems and Ballads," of Robert Louis Stevenson, copyright 1895–1913, by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.

Singing

Of speckled eggs the birdie sings
And nests among the trees;
The sailor sings of ropes and things
In ships upon the seas.

The children sing in far Japan,
The children sing in Spain;
The organ with the organ man
Is singing in the rain.

The Lamplighter

My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky;
It's time to take the window to see Leerie going by;
For every night at tea-time and before you take your seat,
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be;
But I, when I am stronger and can choose what I'm to do,
O Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you!

For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;
And O! before you hurry by with ladder and with light,
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him to-night!

North-west Passage

1. *Good Night*

When the bright lamp is carried in,
The sunless hours again begin;
O'er all without, in field and lane,
The haunted night returns again.

Now we behold the embers flee
About the firelit hearth; and see
Our faces painted as we pass,
Like pictures, on the window-glass.

Must we to bed indeed? Well then,
Let us arise and go like men,
And face with an undaunted tread
The long black passage up to bed.

Farewell, O brother, sister, sire!
O pleasant party round the fire!
The songs you sing, the tales you tell,
Till far to-morrow, fare ye well!

2. *Shadow March*

All round the house is the jet-black night;
It stares through the window-pane;
It crawls in the corners, hiding from the light,
And it moves with the moving flame.

Now my little heart goes a-beating like a drum,
With the breath of the Bogie in my hair;
And all round the candle the crooked shadows come
And go marching along up the stair.

The shadow of the balusters, the shadow of the lamp,
The shadow of the child that goes to bed—
All the wicked shadows coming, tramp, tramp, tramp,
With the black night overhead.

3. *In Port*

Last, to the chamber where I lie
My fearful footsteps patter nigh,
And come from out the cold and gloom
Into my warm and cheerful room.

There, safe arrived, we turn about
To keep the coming shadows out,
And close the happy door at last
On all the perils that we past.

Then, when mamma goes by to bed,
She shall come in with tip-toe tread,
And see me lying warm and fast
And in the Land of Nod at last.

A Visit from the Sea

Far from the loud sea beaches
  Where he goes fishing and crying,
Here in the inland garden
  Why is the sea-gull flying?

Here are no fish to dive for;
  Here is the corn and lea;
Here are the green trees rustling,
  Hie away home to sea!

Fresh is the river water
  And quiet among the rushes;
This is no home for the sea-gull,
  But for the rooks and thrushes.

Pity the bird that has wandered!
  Pity the sailor ashore!
Hurry him home to the ocean,
  Let him come here no more!

High on the sea-cliff ledges
  The white gulls are trooping and crying.
Here among rooks and roses,
  Why is the sea-gull flying?

The House Beautiful

A naked house, a naked moor,
A shivering pool before the door,
A garden bare of flowers and fruit
And poplars at the garden foot:
Such is the place that I live in,
Bleak without and bare within.

Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;
And when the wind from place to place
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,
Your garden gloom and gleam again,
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.
Here shall the wizard moon ascend
The heavens, in the crimson end
Of day's declining splendour; here
The army of the stars appear.
The neighbour hollows, dry or wet,
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;
And oft the morning muser see
Larks rising from the broomy lea,
And every fairy wheel and thread
Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.
When daisies go, shall winter time
Silver the simple grass with rime;
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool
And make the cart-ruts beautiful;
And when snow-bright the moor expands,
How shall your children clap their hands!
To make this earth, our hermitage,
A cheerful and a changeful page,
God's bright and intricate device
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

To K. de M.

A lover of the moorland bare
And honest country winds you were;
The silver-skimming rain you took;
And loved the floodings of the brook,
Dew, frost and mountains, fire and seas,
Tumultuary silences,
Winds that in darkness fifed a tune,
And the high-riding, virgin moon.

And as the berry, pale and sharp,
Springs on some ditch's counterscarp
In our ungenial, native north—
You put your frosted wildings forth,
And on the heath, afar from man,
A strong and bitter virgin ran.

The berry ripened keeps the rude
And racy flavour of the wood.
And you that loved the empty plain
All redolent of wind and rain,
Around you still the curlew sings—
The freshness of the weather clings—
The maiden jewels of the rain
Sit in your dabbled locks again.

In Memoriam F. A. S.

Yet, O stricken heart, remember, O remember
How of human days he lived the better part.
April came to bloom and never dim December
Breathed its killing chills upon the head or heart.

Doomed to know not Winter, only Spring, a being
Trod the flowery April blithely for a while,
Took his fill of music, joy of thought and seeing,
Came and stayed and went, nor ever ceased to smile.

Came and stayed and went, and now when all is finished,
You alone have crossed the melancholy stream,
Yours the pang, but his, O his, the undiminished
Undecaying gladness, undeparted dream.

All that life contains of torture, toil, and treason
Shame, dishonour, death, to him were but a name.
Here, a boy, he dwelt through all the singing season,
And ere the day of sorrow departed as he came.

To F. J. S.

I read, dear friend, in your dear face
Your life's tale told with perfect grace;
The river of your life I trace
Up the sun-chequered, devious bed
To the far-distant fountain-head.

Not one quick beat of your warm heart,
Nor thought that came to you apart,
Pleasure nor pity, love nor pain
Nor sorrow, has gone by in vain;

But as some lone, wood-wandering child
Brings home with him at evening mild
The thorns and flowers of all the wild,
From your whole life, O fair and true,
Your flowers and thorns you bring with you!

"Say not of Me."

Say not of me that weakly I declined
The labours of my sires, and fled the sea,
The towers we founded and the lamps we lit,
To play at home with paper like a child.
But rather say: *In the afternoon of time*
A strenuous family dusted from its hands
The sand of granite, and beholding far
Along the sounding coast its pyramids
And tall memorials catch the dying sun,
Smiled well content, and to this childish task
Around the fire addressed its evening hours.

Requiem

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

A Mile an' a Bittock

A mile an' a bittock, a mile or twa,
Abüne the burn, ayont the law,
Davie an' Donal' an' Cherlie an' a',
An' the müne was shinin' clearly!

Ane went hame wi' the ither, an' then
The ither went hame wi' the ither twa men,
An' baith wad return him the service again,
An' the müne was shinin' clearly!

The clocks were chappin' in house an' ha',
Eleeven, twal an' ane an' twa;
An' the guidman's face was turnt to the wa'
An' the müne was shinin' clearly!

A wind got up frae affa the sea,
It blew the stars as clear's could be,
It blew in the een of a' o' the three,
An' the müne was shinin' clearly!

Noo, Davie was first to get sleep in his head,
"The best o' frien's maun twine," he said;
"I'm weariet, an' here I'm awa' to my bed."
An' the müne was shinin' clearly!

Twa o' them walkin' an' crackin' their lane,
The mornin' licht cam grey an' plain,
An' the birds they yammert on stick an' stane,
An' the müne was shinin' clearly!

O years ayont, O years awa',
My lads, ye'll mind whate'er befa'—
My lads, ye'll mind on the bield o' the law,
When the müne was shinin' clearly.

The Counterblast Ironical

It's strange that God should fash to frame
The yearth and lift sae hie,
An' clean forget to explain the same
To a gentleman like me.

Thae gusty, donnered ither folk,
Their weird they weel may dree;
But why present a pig in a poke
To a gentleman like me?

Thae ither folk their parritch eat
An' sup their sugared tea;
But the mind is no' to be wyled wi' meat
Wi' a gentleman like me.

Thae ither folk, they court their joes
At gloamin' on the lea;
But they're made of a commoner clay, I suppose,
Than a gentleman like me.

Thae ither folk, for richt or wrang,
They suffer, bleed, or dee;
But a' thir things are an emp'y sang
To a gentleman like me.

It's a different thing that I demand,
Tho' humble as can be—
A statement fair in my maker's hand
To a gentleman like me.

A clear account writ fair an broad
An' a plain apologie;
Or the deevil a ceevil word to God
From a gentleman like me.

Christmas at Sea

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;
The wind was a nor'-wester, blowing squally off the sea;
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard:
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every 'longshore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;
And I vow we sniffed the victuáls as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blessèd Christmas morn,
And the house above the coastguard's was the house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,
Go dancing round the china plates that stand upon the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessèd Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.
"All hands to loose topgallant sails," I heard the captain call.
"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate, Jackson, cried.
. . . "It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson," he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood,
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,
We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.

"I WILL MAKE YOU BROOCHES"

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.

"Bright is the Ring of Words."

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them.
Still they are carolled and said—
On wings they are carried—
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

My Wife

Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,
Steel-true and blade-straight,
The great artificer
Made my mate.

Honour, anger, valour, fire;
A love that life could never tire,
Death quench or evil stir,
The mighty master
Gave to her.

Teacher, tender, comrade, wife,
A fellow-farer true through life,
Heart-whole and soul-free
The august father
Gave to me.

If this were Faith

God, if this were enough,
That I see things here to the buff
And up to the buttocks in mire;
That I ask nor hope nor hire,
Nut in the husk,
Nor dawn beyond the dusk,
Nor life beyond death:
God, if this were faith?

Having felt Thy wind in my face
Spit sorrow and disgrace,
Having seen Thine evil doom
In Golgotha and Khartoum,
And the brutes, the work of Thine hands,
Fill with injustice lands
And stain with blood the sea:
If still in my veins the glee
Of the black night and the sun
And the lost battle, run:
If, an adept,
The iniquitous lists I still accept
With joy, and joy to endure and be withstood,
And still to battle and perish for a dream of good:
God, if that were enough?

If to feel in the ink of the slough,
And the sink of the mire,
Veins of glory and fire
Run through and transpierce and transpire,
And a secret purpose of glory in every part.
And the answering glory of battle fill my heart;
To thrill with the joy of girded men,
To go on for ever and fail and go on again.
And be mauled to the earth and arise,
And contend for the shade of a word and a thing not seen with the eyes:
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night
That somehow the right is the right
And the smooth shall bloom from the rough:
Lord, if that were enough?

(TO THE TUNE OF WANDERING WILLIE)

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?
Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather;
Thick drives the rain, and my roof is in the dust.
Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree,
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door—
Dear days of old, with the faces in the firelight,
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,
Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.
Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland,
Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.
Now, when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.
Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of old.

Spring shall come, come again, calling up the moor-fowl,
Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees and flowers;
Red shall the heather bloom over hill and valley,
Soft flow the stream through the even-flowing hours;
Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood—
Fair shine the day on the house with open door;
Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney—
But I go for ever and come again no more.

To S. C.

I heard the pulse of the besieging sea
Throb far away all night. I heard the wind
Fly crying and convulse tumultuous palms.
I rose and strolled. The isle was all bright sand,
And flailing fans and shadows of the palm;
The heaven all moon and wind and the blind vault;
The keenest planet slain, for Venus slept.

The King, my neighbour, with his host of wives,
Slept in the precinct of the palisade;
Where single, in the wind, under the moon,
Among the slumbering cabins, blazed a fire,
Sole street-lamp and the only sentinel.
To other lands and nights my fancy turned—
To London first, and chiefly to your house,
The many-pillared and the well-beloved.
There yearning fancy lighted; there again
In the upper room I lay, and heard far off
The unsleeping city murmur like a shell;
The muffled tramp of the Museum guard
Once more went by me; I beheld again
Lamps vainly brighten the dispeopled street;
Again I longed for the returning morn,
The awaking traffic, the bestirring birds,
The consentaneous trill of tiny song
That weaves round monumental cornices
A passing charm of beauty. Most of all,
For your light foot I wearied, and your knock
That was the glad réveillé of my day.
Lo, now, when to your task in the great house
At morning through the portico you pass,
One moment glance, where by the pillared wall
Far-voyaging island gods, begrimed with smoke,
Sit now unworshipped, the rude monument
Of faiths forgot and races undivined;
Sit now disconsolate, remembering well
The priest, the victim, and the songful crowd,
The blaze of the blue noon, and that huge voice,
Incessant, of the breakers on the shore.
As far as these from their ancestral shrine,
So far, so foreign, your divided friends
Wander, estranged in body, not in mind.

APEMAMA.

"The Tropics vanish"

The tropics vanish, and meseems that I,
From Halkerside, from topmost Allermuir,
Or steep Caerketton, dreaming gaze again.
Far set in fields and woods, the town I see
Spring gallant from the shallows of her smoke,
Cragged, spired, and turreted, her virigin fort
Beflagged. About, on seaward-drooping hills,
New folds of city glitter. Last, the Forth
Wheels ample waters set with sacred isles,
And populous Fife smokes with a score of towns
There, on the sunny frontage of a hill,
Hard by the house of kings, repose the dead,
My dead, the ready and the strong of word.
Their works, the salt-encrusted, still survive;
The sea bombards their founded towers; the night
Thrills pierced with their strong lamps. The artificers,
One after one, here in this grated cell,
Where the rain erases and the rust consumes,
Fell upon lasting silence. Continents
And continental oceans intervene;
A sea uncharted, on a lampless isle,
Environs and confines their wandering child
In vain. The voice of generations dead
Summons me, sitting distant, to arise,
My numerous footsteps nimbly to retrace,
And, all mutation over, stretch me down
In that denoted city of the dead.

Apemama.

Tropic Rain

As the single pang of the blow, when the metal is mingled well,
Rings and lives and resounds in all the bounds of the bell,
So the thunder above spoke with a single tongue,
So in the heart of the mountain the sound of it rumbled and clung.

Sudden the thunder was drowned—quenched was the levin light—
And the angel-spirit of rain laughed out loud in the night.
Loud as the maddened rivers in the cloven glen,
Angel of rain! you laughed and leaped on the roofs of men;

And the sleepers sprang in their beds, and joyed and feared as you fell.
You struck, and my cabin quailed; the roof of it roared like a bell.
You spoke, and at once the mountain shouted and shook with brooks.
You ceased, and the day returned, rosy, with virgin looks.

And methought that beauty and terror are only one, not two;
And the world has room for love, and death, and thunder, and dew,
And all the sinews of hell slumber in summer air;
And the face of God is a rock, but the face of the rock is fair.
Beneficent streams of tears flow at the finger of pain;
And out of the cloud that smites, beneficent rivers of rain.

VAILIMA.

To S. R. CROCKETT

(ON RECEIVING A DEDICATION)

Blows the wind to-day, and the sun and the rain are flying,
Blows the wind on the moors to-day and now,
Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying,
My heart remembers how!

Grey recumbent tombs of the dead in desert places,
Standing-stones on the vacant wine-red moor,
Hills of sheep, and the homes of the silent vanished races,
And winds, austere and pure:

Be it granted me to behold you again in dying,
Hills of home! and to hear again the call;
Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees crying,
And hear no more at all.

VAILIMA.

Evensong

The embers of the day are red
Beyond the murky hill.
The kitchen smokes; the bed
In the darkling house is spread:
The great sky darkens overhead,
And the great woods are shrill.
So far have I been led,
Lord, by thy will:
So far I have followed, Lord, and wondered still.
The breeze from the embalmèd land
Blows sudden towards the shore,
And claps my cottage door.
I hear the signal, Lord—I understand.
The night at thy command
Comes. I will eat and sleep and will not question more.

Vailima.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

[W. E. Henley, b. 1849, eldest son of William Henley, a Gloucester bookseller, educated at the Crypt School, Gloucester, under T. E. Brown, afterwards well known as a Clifton master and as the Manx poet. From his twelfth year Henley suffered from a tuberculous disease; one foot was amputated before he was twenty; then he went into hospital at Edinburgh for nearly two years, where the other leg was saved by the skill of Sir Joseph Lister. In 1877 he was well enough to begin a literary life in London, where he wrote criticism for many papers and magazines, and edited the *Magazine of Art* (1882–6) and the *Scots Observer* (at Edinburgh), which became the *National Observer* in 1891. From time to time he had also been writing verse, which he collected and published under various titles between 1888 and 1892, when the *London Voluntaries* appeared. With R. L. Stevenson he joined in writing four plays, of which *Beau Austin* and *Deacon Brodie* became well known on the English and American stage. His work as an editor of old and new literature was also varied and abundant, reaching from the Edinburgh folio of Shakespeare to the collected poems of his old teacher, T. E. Brown. Henley married Miss Anna Boyle in 1878, and was the father of one child, Margaret, who was the "Reddy" of J. M. Barrie's *Sentimental Tommy;* she died at five years old, in 1894. Nine years later, in 1903, Henley died at Woking, having achieved, though a lifelong invalid, a vast quantity of literary work, and became a kind of leader of a whole school of critics, literary, æsthetic, and in the wider sense political.]

Of W. E. Henley it may be said more truthfully than of any other poet that he "learned in suffering what he taught in song." An enforced visit to the Old Infirmary of Edinburgh was for him the active beginning of his poetic life. With the simple faith which always inspired him, he sought in a strange city the one surgeon of his trust. He found what was no less precious than the healing hand of Lister, experience and literary comradeship. The hospital, "cold, naked, clean, half-workhouse and half-jail," was his University. Within its grey walls he made himself master of French and Spanish and laid the foundations of a sound scholarship. In the "transformed back-kitchen where he lay" he studied

many literatures, he knit closely many friendships. Thence he sent his first essays in verse to the *Cornhill Magazine;* there Leslie Stephen and Robert Louis Stevenson discovered him. Yet it was not they who first recognized his talent. It had been his good fortune to learn the rudiments at the Crypt School of Gloucester, from T. E. Brown, who encouraged him in his boyhood with good counsel and a gift of books. From T. E. Brown's point of view, Henley wrote years afterwards, "'the Gloucester episode' was, I take it, an unpleasing and ridiculous experiment. From mine it was an unqualified success: since it made him known to me, and . . . discovered me the beginnings, the true material, of myself."

Thus it was that when he came to Edinburgh, Henley was already dedicated to letters. He had attempted both prose and verse. He had written the parodies of Swinburne which were incident to the youth of his generation. He had made a brief acquaintanceship with Fleet Street. But the Old Infirmary gave him a new vision of things and a fresh style. His series *In Hospital* showed him at once a finished craftsman, a stern and sure critic of his own work. In unrhymed verse, economical of phrase and sternly castigated, he recorded, with abundant cheerfulness and without a hint of despair, the sights and sounds of the grim Infirmary. When after many years of hopeless waiting he got these first poems published, they were described in the jargon of the hour as "realistic." Their material was real enough—that is true; but so keen was Henley's sense of selection, that the mere hint of "realism" was an injustice. He was but turning into poetry with a poet's skill the patiently observed life about him, and sacrificing nothing of his art to the realist's love of facts. He watched the hardship and squalor of the hospital with equanimity, but, as Meredith has said, "when he was restored to companionship with his fellows one involuntary touch occurs in his verse to tell of the suffering he had passed through. He rejoiced in the smell of the streets. There we have the lover of life arising from the depths. Such was the man."

He was, as I have said, a stern critic of himself. He had no love of short cuts or easy methods. He obeyed the injunction of Horace, and kept his poems long under the file. Above all he was the faithful servant of tradition, and when he wrote in unrhymed verse he was conscious of the chain which bound him to the past, and held in his memory the noble choruses of *Samson Agonistes.*

In his love of long words—"the irreclaimable menace of the sea," "the unimagined vastitudes beyond," "the unanswering generations of the dead"—he proved himself a true pupil of Milton. Yet so near were his thought and vision to the true world of common things that he took a frank delight in familiar images. The moon for him is "a clown's face flour'd for work," vember is "the old lean widow." The class in the hospital hurrying through the ward after the chief suggests to him

> "the ring
> Seen from behind round a conjurer
> Doing his pitch in the street."

Still more greatly daring he compares the lighthouse, the guide to the "stalwart ships," with

> "The tall Policeman,
> Flashing his bull's-eye, as he peers
> About him in the ancient vacancy,
> Tells them this way is safety—this way home."

Thus he touched with a vivid life, all his own, the old harmonies, and was amply justified of his courage. But it was London and its river—"O River of Journeys, River of Dreams"—which inspired him to his noblest poems. The *London Voluntaries* show most clearly the magician that he was. "Light of the skies playing upon smoky vapour, city scenery, city crowds"—these were the motives of his *Voluntaries*, and he handled them like a musician. For the rest, in whatever he wrote of prose or verse he breathed the spirit of hope and energy. With a serene submission, he acknowledges himself "a servant of the Will," and, unafraid before "the menace of the years," gives thanks for his "unconquerable soul." Such, briefly, is the simple gospel—a cheerful, sometimes defiant, acceptance of destiny's decrees—which he preaches with fervency and a constant heart, nowhere more eloquently than in the poem "Out of the night that covers me," already become a classic of our speech. He showed his love of battle not only in his *Song of the Sword*, but in a constant readiness to fight for his beliefs and his ideals. In *Pro Rege Nostro* he sounded the note of patriotism as few have sounded it. And as he asked courage of others, so he showed a rare courage himself. He

never permitted his infirmity to hamper his life, he never confessed even to his own ear that he was a sick man. In criticism he combined "enthusiasm" with "wakeful judgment." So widely catholic was his taste, that he was ready to welcome and approve the boldest experiment, and it will be remembered of him gladly that his hand was ever the hand of a helper.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

FROM "IN HOSPITAL"

STAFF-NURSE: OLD STYLE

The greater masters of the commonplace,
REMBRANDT and good SIR WALTER—only these
Could paint her all to you: experienced ease
And antique liveliness and ponderous grace;
The sweet old roses of her sunken face;
The depth and malice of her sly, grey eyes;
The broad Scots tongue that flatters, scolds, defies,
The thick Scots wit that fells you like a mace.
These thirty years has she been nursing here,
Some of them under SYME, her hero still.
Much is she worth, and even more is made of her.
Patients and students hold her very dear.
The doctors love her, tease her, use her skill.
They say "The Chief" himself is half-afraid of her.

STAFF-NURSE: NEW STYLE

Blue-eyed and bright of face, but waning fast
Into the sere of virginal decay,
I view her as she enters, day by day,
As a sweet sunset almost overpast.
Kindly and calm, patrician to the last,
Superbly falls her gown of sober grey,
And on her chignon's elegant array
The plainest cap is somehow touched with caste.
She talks BEETHOVEN; frowns diapprobation
At BALZAC'S name, sighs it at "poor GEORGE SAND'S";

Knows that she has exceeding pretty hands;
Speaks Latin with a right accentuation;
And gives at need (as one who understands)
Draught, counsel, diagnosis, exhortation.

LADY-PROBATIONER

Some three, or five, or seven, and thirty years;
A Roman nose; a dimpling double-chin;
Dark eyes and shy that, ignorant of sin,
Are yet acquainted, it would seem, with tears;
A comely shape; a slim, high-coloured hand,
Graced, rather oddly, with a signet ring;
A bashful air, becoming everything;
A well-bred silence always at command.
Her plain print gown, prim cap, and bright steel chain
Look out of place on her, and I remain
Absorbed in her, as in a pleasant mystery.
Quick, skilful, quiet, soft in speech and touch . . .
"Do you like nursing?" "Yes, Sir, very much."
Somehow, I rather think she has a history.

"THE CHIEF" [1]

His brow spreads large and placid, and his eye
Is deep and bright, with steady looks that still.
Soft lines of tranquil thought his face fulfill—
His face at once benign and proud and shy.
If envy scout, if ignorance deny,
His faultless patience, his unyielding will,
Beautiful gentleness and splendid skill,
Innumerable gratitudes reply.
His wise, rare smile is sweet with certainties,
And seems in all his patients to compel
Such love and faith as failure cannot quell.
We hold him for another Herakles,
Battling with custom, prejudice, disease,
As once the son of Zeus with Death and Hell.

[1] Sir Joseph Lister, the great surgeon.

APPARITION

Thin-legged, thin-chested, slight unspeakably,
Neat-footed and weak-fingered: in his face—
Lean, large-boned, curved of beak, and touched with race,
Bold-lipped, rich-tinted, mutable as the sea,
The brown eyes radiant with vivacity—
There shines a brilliant and romantic grace,
A spirit intense and rare, with trace on trace
Of passion and impudence and energy.
Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck,
Most vain, most generous, sternly critical,
Buffoon and poet, lover and sensualist:
A deal of Ariel, just a streak of Puck,
Much Antony, of Hamlet most of all,
And something of the Shorter-Catechist.

DISCHARGED

Carry me out
Into the wind and the sunshine,
Into the beautiful world.

O, the wonder, the spell of the streets!
The stature and strength of the horses,
The rustle and echo of footfalls,
The flat roar and rattle of wheels!
A swift tram floats huge on us . . .
It's a dream?
The smell of the mud in my nostrils
Blows brave—like a breath of the sea!

As of old,
Ambulant, undulant drapery,
Vaguely and strangely provocative,
Flutters and beckons. O, yonder—
Is it?—the gleam of a stocking!

Sudden, a spire
Wedged in the mist! O, the houses,
The long lines of lofty, grey houses,
Cross-hatched with shadow and light!
These are the streets. . . .
Each is an avenue leading
Whither I will!

Free . . . .!
Dizzy, hysterical, faint,
I sit, and the carriage rolls on with me
Into the wonderful world.

THE OLD INFIRMARY, EDINBURGH, 1873–75.

I. M.

R. T. HAMILTON BRUCE

(1846–99)

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade.
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

To W. A.

Or ever the knightly years were gone
With the old world to the grave,
I was a King in Babylon
And you were a Christian Slave.

I saw, I took, I cast you by,
I bent and broke your pride.
You loved me well, or I heard them lie,
But your longing was denied.
Surely I knew that by and by
You cursed your gods and died.

And a myriad suns have set and shone
Since then upon the grave
Decreed by the King in Babylon
To her that had been his Slave.

The pride I trampled is now my scathe,
For it tramples me again.
The old resentment lasts like death,
For you love, yet you refrain.
I break my heart on your hard unfaith,
And I break my heart in vain.

Yet not for an hour do I wish undone
The deed beyond the grave,
When I was a King in Babylon
And you were a Virgin Slave.

To A. C.

Not to the staring Day,
For all the importunate questionings he pursues
In his big, violent voice,
Shall those mild things of bulk and multitude,
The Trees—God's sentinels
Over His gift of live, life-giving air—
Yield of their huge, unutterable selves.
Midsummer-manifold, each one
Voluminous, a labyrinth of life,

They keep their greenest musings, and the dim dreams
That haunt their leafier privacies,
Dissembled, baffling the random gapeseed still
With blank full-faces, or the innocent guile
Of laughter flickering back from shine to shade,
And disappearances of homing birds,
And frolicsome freaks
Of little boughs that frisk with little boughs.

But at the word
Of the ancient, sacerdotal Night,
Night of the many secrets, whose effect—
Transfiguring, hierophantic, dread—
Themselves alone may fully apprehend,
They tremble and are changed.
In each, the uncouth individual soul
Looms forth and glooms
Essential, and, their bodily presences
Touched with inordinate significance,
Wearing the darkness like the livery
Of some mysterious and tremendous guild,
They brood—they menace—they appal;
Or the anguish of prophecy tears them, and they wring
Wild hands of warning in the face
Of some inevitable advance of doom;
Or, each to the other bending, beckoning, signing
As in some monstrous market-place,
They pass the news, these Gossips of the Prime,
In that old speech their forefathers
Learned on the lawns of Eden, ere they heard
The troubled voice of Eve
Naming the wondering folk of Paradise.

Your sense is sealed, or you should hear them tell
The tale of their dim life, with all
Its compost of experience: how the Sun
Spreads them their daily feast,
Sumptuous, of light, firing them as with wine;
Of the old Moon's fitful solicitude
And those mild messages the Stars
Descend in silver silences and dews;

Or what the sweet-breathing West,
Wanton with wading in the swirl of the wheat,
Said, and their leafage laughed;
And how the wet-winged Angel of the Rain
Came whispering . . . whispering; and the gifts of the Year—
The sting of the stirring sap
Under the wizardry of the young-eyed Spring,
Their summer amplitudes of pomp,
Their rich autumnal melancholy, and the shrill,
Embittered housewifery
Of the lean Winter: all such things,
And with them all the goodness of the Master,
Whose right hand blesses with increase and life,
Whose left hand honours with decay and death.

Thus under the constraint of Night
These gross and simple creatures,
Each in his scores of rings, which rings are years,
A servant of the Will!
And God, the Craftsman, as He walks
The floor of His workshop; hearkens, full of cheer
In thus accomplishing
The aims of His miraculous artistry.

Pro Rege Nostro

What have I done for you,
    England, my England?
What is there I would not do,
    England, my own?
With your glorious eyes austere,
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear
    As the Song on your bugles blown,
        England—
    Round the world on your bugles blown!

Where shall the watchful Sun,
    England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
    England, my own?

When shall he rejoice agen
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
To the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Down the years on your bugles blown?

Ever the faith endures,
England, my England:—
"Take and break us: we are yours,
"England, my own!
"Life is good, and joy runs high
"Between English earth and sky:
"Death is death; but we shall die
"To the Song on your bugles blown,
"England—
"To the stars on your bugles blown!"

They call you proud and hard,
England, my England:
You with worlds to watch and ward,
England, my own!
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys
Of such teeming destinies
You could know nor dread nor ease
Were the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Round the Pit on your bugles blown!

Mother of Ships whose might,
England, my England,
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,
England, my own,
Chosen daughter of the Lord,
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword,
There's the menace of the Word
In the Song on your bugles blown,
England—
Out of heaven on your bugles blown!

ANDREW LANG

[Born at Selkirk, 1844. Educated at the Edinburgh Academy, at St. Andrews, and at Balliol College, Oxford, whence he obtained a first class in the Final Classical Schools and a Fellowship at Merton. Settled in London; married Leonora, youngest daughter of Mr. C. T. Alleyne of Clifton, and sister of Miss S. F. Alleyne, who was associated with Evelyn Abbott in translating Duncker's *History of Greece* and Zeller's *History of Philosophy*. About 1875, Lang began a long career as journalist and author, writing "light" leaders for the *Daily News* and "middles" for the *Saturday Review*, and producing a multiplicity of excellent books in verse and prose. Among the latter were several Homeric studies and translations, books on Scottish history, and others on Anthropology, including serious matters like the Origins of Religion and lighter departments like Folk-lore and Fairy Tales. His poems began with *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France* (1872), and after a long interval went on to *Ballades in Blue China*, *Grass of Parnassus*, and many others. He died on July 20, 1912, mourned by many friends and regretted by a multitude of readers.]

Andrew Lang was not primarily a poet, but a writer to whom all subjects and many languages seemed to come by nature. He was equally at home in Homer's Greek, in old French romances, and in many phases of modern literature; at once a serious and scientific disputant, a sound critic, a humorist, and both familiar with a score of other men's styles and master of a distinctive style of his own. Here we are only concerned with his verse, which one reads with all the greater pleasure because most of it is evidently the relaxation of a worker, almost too busy a worker, in other fields. A large number of his poems are the direct outcome of his reading and of his prose labours; for example, the volume in which he introduced English readers to the almost forgotten ballads and lyrics in which early French literature abounds, the poems in which he recast thoughts suggested by Homer and Herodotus, such as the fine "Odyssey" sonnet, and those which he consecrated to the heroes of his own time, Gordon above all. Lang was no politician in the party sense; his leading articles had for the most part nothing to do with politics; but he had a profound belief in

national duty, a profound regard for the national honour, and a positive horror of any political faltering or paltering where that honour was at stake. Certain of his poems give an almost fierce expression to that feeling, but the large majority are lighter in subject and in touch. They are the utterances of a man steeped in the best literature of all the ages, and at the same time delighted when he could express his healthy pleasure in nature and physical exercise—cricket, golf, fishing—and still more when he could play upon the fancies and the foibles of his time with that humorous touch that his readers still find so attractive and so inimitable.

EDITOR.

THE ODYSSEY

As one that for a weary space has lain
  Lulled by the song of Circe and her Wine
  In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Aegaean Isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
  And only shadows of wan lovers pine;
  As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again.
So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
  Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
    Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers
    And through the music of the languid hours,
They hear like ocean on a Western beach
  The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

HERODOTUS IN EGYPT

He left the land of youth, he left the young,
  The smiling gods of Greece; he passed the isle
Where Jason loitered, and where Sappho sung;
  He sought the secret-founted wave of Nile,
  And of their old world, dead a weary while,
Heard the priests murmur in their mystic tongue,
And through the fanes went voyaging, among
  Dark tribes that worshipped Cat and Crocodile.

He learned the tales of death Divine and birth,
Strange loves of Hawk and Serpent, Sky and Earth,
The marriage, and the slaying of the Sun.
The shrines of gods and beasts he wandered through,
And mocked not at their godhead, for he knew
Behind all creeds the Spirit that is One.

COLINETTE

[For a Sketch by Mr. G. Leslie, R. A.]

France your country, as we know;
Room enough for guessing yet,
What lips now or long ago,
Kissed and named you—Colinette.
In what fields from sea to sea,
By what stream your home was set,
Loire or Seine was glad of thee,
Marne or Rhone, O Colinette?

Did you stand with maidens ten,
Fairer maids were never seen,
When the young king and his men
Passed among the orchards green?
Nay, old ballads have a note
Mournful, we would fain forget;
No such sad old air should float
Round your young brows, Colinette.

Say, did Ronsard sing to you,
Shepherdess, to lull his pain,
When the court went wandering through
Rose pleasances of Touraine?
Ronsard and his favourite Rose
Long are dust the breezes fret;
You, within the garden close,
You are blooming, Colinette.

Have I seen you proud and gay,
With a patched and perfumed beau,
Dancing through the summer day,
Misty summer of Watteau?

Nay, so sweet a maid as you
Never walked a minuet
With the splendid courtly crew;
Nay, forgive me, Colinette.

Not from Greuze's canvases
Do you cast a glance, a smile;
You are not as one of these,
Yours is beauty without guile.
Round your maiden brows and hair
Maidenhood and Childhood met
Crown and kiss you, sweet and fair,
New art's blossom, Colinette.

Pen and Ink [1]

Ye wanderers that were my sires,
Who read men's fortunes in the hand,
Who voyaged with your smithy fires
From waste to waste across the land,
Why did you leave for garth and town
Your life by heath and river's brink,
Why lay your gipsy freedom down
And doom your child to Pen and Ink?

You wearied of the wild-wood meal
That crowned, or failed to crown, the day;
Too honest or too tame to steal
You broke into the beaten way:
Plied loom or awl like other men,
And learned to love the guineas' chink—
Oh, recreant sires, who doomed me then
To earn so few—with Pen and Ink!

Where it hath fallen the tree must lie;
'Tis over late for *me* to roam,
Yet the caged bird who hears the cry
Of his wild fellows fleeting home
May feel no sharper pang than mine,
Who seem to hear, whene'er I think,
Spate in the stream, and wind in pine,
Call me to quit dull Pen and Ink.

[1] Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, from "Pen and Ink." Copyright, 1888, 1902, by Brander Matthews.

For then the spirit wandering,
That slept within the blood, awakes;
For then the summer and the spring
I fain would meet by streams and lakes;
But ah! my birthright long is sold,
But custom chains me, link on link,
And I must get me, as of old,
Back to my tools, to Pen and Ink.

The White Pacha

Vain is the dream! However Hope may rave,
He perished with the folk he could not save,
And though none surely told us he is dead,
And though perchance another in his stead,
Another, not less brave, when all was done,
Had fled unto the southward and the sun,
Had urged a way by force, or won by guile
To streams remotest of the secret Nile,
Had raised an army of the Desert men,
And, waiting for his hour, had turned again
And fallen on that False Prophet, yet we know
Gordon is dead, and these things are not so!
Nay, not for England's cause, nor to restore
Her trampled flag—for he loved Honour more—
Nay, not for Life, Revenge, or Victory,
Would he have fled, whose hour had dawned to die.
He will not come again, whate'er our need,
He will not come, who is happy, being freed
From the deathly flesh and perishable things,
And lies of statesmen and rewards of kings.
Nay, somewhere by the sacred River's shore
He sleeps like those who shall return no more,
No more return for all the prayers of men—
Arthur and Charles—they never come again!
They shall not wake, though fair the vision seem:
Whate'er sick hope may whisper, vain the dream!

Advance, Australia

On the offer of help from the Australians after the fall of Khartoum

Sons of the giant Ocean isle
  In sport our friendly foes for long,
Well England loves you, and we smile,
When you outmarch us many a while,
  So fleet you are, so keen and strong.

You, like that fairy people set
  Of old in their enchanted sea
Far off from men, might well forget
An elder nation's toil and fret,
  Might heed not aught but game and glee.

But what your fathers were you are
  In lands the fathers never knew,
'Neath skies of alien sign and star
You rally to the English war;
  Your hearts are English, kind and true.

And now, when first on England falls
  The shadow of a darkening fate,
You hear the Mother ere she calls,
You leave your ocean-girdled walls,
  And face her foemen in the gate.

Ballade of the Book-hunter

In torrid heats of late July,
In March, beneath the bitter *bise*,
He book-hunts while the loungers fly,—
He book-hunts, though December freeze;
In breeches baggy at the knees,
And heedless of the public jeers,
For these, for these, he hoards his fees,—
Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs.

No dismal stall escapes the eye,
He turns o'er tomes of low degrees,
There soiled romanticists may lie,
Or Restoration comedies;
Each tract that flutters in the breeze
For him is charged with hopes and fears,
In mouldy novels fancy sees
Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs.

With restless eyes that peer and spy,
Sad eyes that heed not skies or trees,
In dismal nooks he loves to pry,
Whose motto evermore is *Spes!*
But ah! the fabled treasure flees;
Grown rarer with the fleeting years,
In rich men's shelves they take their ease,—
Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs!

ENVOY

Prince, all the things that tease and please,—
Fame, hope, wealth, kisses, cheers and tears,
What are they but such toys as these—
Aldines, Bodonis, Elzevirs?

The Old Love and the New

How oft I've watched her footstep glide
  Across the enamelled plain,
And deemed she was the fairest bride
  And I the fondest swain!
How oft with her I've cast me down
  Beneath the odorous limes,
How often twined her daisy crown,
  In the glad careless times!

By that old wicket ne'er we meet
  Where still we met of yore,
But I have found another sweet
  Beside the salt sea-shore:

With sea-daisies her locks I wreathe,
  With sea-grass bind her hands,
And salt and sharp's the air we breathe
  Beside the long sea-sands!

Mine old true love had eyes of blue,
  And *Willow!* was her song;
Sea-green her eyes, my lady new,
  And of the East her tongue.
And she that's worsted in the strife,
  A southland lass is she;
But she that's won—the Neuk o' Fife,
  It is her ain countrie!

No more the old sweet words we call,
  These kindly words of yore,—
"Over!" "Hard in!" "Leg-bye!" "No ball!"
  Ah now we say "Two more;"
And of the "Like" and "Odd" we shout,
  Till swains and maidens scoff;
"The fact is, Cricket's been bowled out
  By that eternal Golf!"

The Last Chance

Within the streams, Pausanias saith,
  That down Cocytus valley flow,
Girding the grey domain of Death,
  The spectral fishes come and go;
The ghosts of trout flit to and fro.
  Persephone, fulfil my wish,
And grant that in the shades below
  My ghost may land the ghosts of fish.

HUMOROUS VERSE

By C. L. Graves

The world is supposed to grow more serious if not sadder with its increasing burden of years, but certainly England in the nineteenth century showed considerable skill in dissembling its sadness in song. No century has been richer in verse written in a mood of conscious levity. It began joyously with the *Rejected Addresses*, with the *Anti-Jacobin*, with the brilliant fooling of Hook, Barham's ingenious medley of the comic and the *macabre*, and the patrician grace and gaiety of Praed. Though light verse became sentimental in the *Keepsake* period, the torch was never dropped, but was handed on from Lamb to Hood, from Praed to Locker, and, in the domain of the new parody, from the brothers Smith to Martin and Aytoun, and from them to Calverley. As for occasional verse, Frederick Locker laid down the rules of the game as he conceived it should be played, and as he certainly played it, in words which cannot be bettered:—

"Occasional verse should be short, graceful, refined, and fanciful, not seldom distinguished by chastened sentiment, and often playful. The tone should not be pitched high; it should be terse and idiomatic, and rather in the conversational key; the rhythm should be crisp and sparkling, and the rhyme frequent and never forced, while the entire poem should be marked by tasteful moderation, high finish and completeness; for, however trivial the subject-matter may be, indeed, rather in proportion to its triviality, subordination to the rules of composition, and perfection of execution, are of the utmost importance."

But a great deal of the best light or humorous poetry written in the last half of the nineteenth century stands outside Locker's definition of occasional verse. Praed's influence was very considerable. He had many imitators, and to this day there are very few writers of light verse who at one time or another have not made him their model. It has, however, been almost always a mere passing phase of discipleship. Locker himself was almost

the last of his successful followers. *Vers de société* have been dethroned from the exalted position they once held in the domain of light verse, and parody has long been raised from crude verbal mimicry to a high art and an instrument of literary criticism. The successors of Canning, the Smiths, and *Bon Gaultier* have maintained and improved on the high level of achievement reached in this branch, and it is impossible to render justice to modern humorous verse without taking parody into special account. Indeed, the work of the best living parodists goes a long way to justify the contention of one of their number—that the finest parody is based not on derision but on admiration, on the principle that "faithful are the wounds of a friend." But the borders of this domain were enlarged in other ways. Scholarship was allied to high spirits and irresponsibility, and the charm of exhilarating nonsense appealed to readers of all ages.

Apart from the contributions of light-hearted scholars, artistic parodists, and writers of romantic nonsense, there remains the sphere of comic topical verse, burlesque, and extravaganza. Here, too, it may be fairly contended that in the period under review the example of Barham and Hook has been bettered by their followers, certainly in respect of technique. Hood in his own line remains unsurpassed: we can point to no sustained humorous or satirical narrative equal to *Miss Kilmansegg*. But in W. S. Gilbert we had a writer who achieved for burlesque what Calverley did for parody, who had a wider appeal than any other composer of light verse in his day, and who by his wit and technical dexterity raised the literary quality of the *libretti* of comic opera to a level never reached before.

(1) W. M. THACKERAY

[WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY was born at Calcutta in 1811. Educated at Charterhouse and Cambridge, he studied art, travelled a good deal on the Continent, and contributed freely in prose and verse to various journals before achieving fame as a novelist. His great works—*Vanity Fair*, *Esmond*, *The Virginians*, *Pendennis*, and *The Newcomes*—were all written between 1848 and 1860. He died in 1864.]

Thackeray's greatness rests on his novels, but his excursions in metre, though they represent a small portion of his literary baggage, run into thousands of lines and fill nearly three hundred pages of one of the miscellaneous volumes of his collected works. His connexion with *Punch* began in 1842 and established his fame as a humorist. Most of his contributions were in prose, but he wrote a good deal of excellent satirical and topical verse for *Punch*, including the *Bow Street Ballads* (1848) and the *Battle of Limerick* in the same year. Many of his best poems, however, are to be found scattered through his various prose writings, for he followed the example of Scott in using verse in his novels, stories, and sketches, in the form of decoration or interlude. Humour is the prevailing note; sometimes grim, as in the *Chronicle of the Drum*, the best of his ballads, but more often satirical and caustic; sometimes extravagant, as in the *Lyra Hibernica*. *Charlotte* might have been written by Canning. *Peg of Limavaddy* recalls Father Prout, and some of his pieces are frankly derivative, such as the spirited paraphrases of Béranger, Ronsard, Uhland, Chamisso, and Horace. He excelled also in *vers de société* and occasional poems with an undercurrent of seriousness or irony; indeed, there are few branches of light verse that he did not adorn save that of parody. Some of his topical verse hardly rose above the level of first-class journalism, and the "Jeames" and "Pleeceman X" ballads have lost their savour from the virtual extinction of the types depicted and dialect employed. But enough remains, apart from the general fame of the writer, to ensure him a distinguished position among Victorian writers of light verse.

FROM "VANITAS VANITATUM"

O Vanity of vanities!
  How wayward the decrees of Fate are;
How very weak the very wise
  How very small the very great are!

What mean these stale moralities,
Sir Preacher, from your desk you mumble?
Why rail against the great and wise,
And tire us with your ceaseless grumble?

Pray choose us out another text,
O man morose and narrow-minded!
Come turn the page—I read the next,
And then the next, and still I find it.

Read here how Wealth aside was thrust,
And Folly set in place exalted;
How Princes footed in the dust,
While lacquey in the saddle vaulted.

Though thrice a thousand years are past
Since David's son, the sad and splendid,
The weary King Ecclesiast,
Upon his awful tablets penned it,—

Methinks the text is never stale,
And life is every day renewing
Fresh comments on the old old tale
Of Folly, Fortune, Glory, Ruin.

Hark to the Preacher, preaching still!
He lifts his voice and cries his sermon,
Here at St. Peter's of Cornhill,
As yonder on the Mount of Hermon;

For you and me to heart to take
(O dear beloved brother readers)
To-day, as when the good King spake
Beneath the solemn Syrian cedars.

The Age of Wisdom

[From *Rebecca and Rowena*]

Ho! pretty page, with dimpled chin,
That never has known the barber's shear,
All your aim is woman to win.
This is the way that boys begin.
Wait till you've come to forty year!

Curly gold locks cover foolish brains,
  Billing and cooing is all your cheer,
Sighing and singing of midnight strains
Under Bonnybell's window-panes.
  Wait till you've come to forty year!

Forty times over let Michaelmas pass,
  Grizzling hair the brain doth clear;
Then you know a boy is an ass,
Then you know the worth of a lass,
  Once you have come to forty year.

Pledge me round, I bid ye declare,
  All good fellows whose beards are grey;
Did not the fairest of the fair
Common grow and wearisome, ere
  Ever a month was past away?

The reddest lips that ever have kissed,
  The brightest eyes that ever have shone,
May pray and whisper and we not list,
Or look away and never be missed,
  Ere yet ever a month was gone.

Gillian's dead, Heaven rest her bier,
  How I loved her twenty years syne!
Marian's married, but I sit here,
Alive and merry at forty year,
  Dipping my nose in the Gascon wine.

Sorrows of Werther

Werther had a love for Charlotte
  Such as words could never utter;
Would you know how first he met her?
  She was cutting bread and butter.

Charlotte was a married lady,
  And a moral man was Werther,
And, for all the wealth of Indies,
  Would do nothing for to hurt her.

So he sighed and pined and ogled,
And his passion boiled and bubbled,
Till he blew his silly brains out,
And no more was by it troubled.

Charlotte, having seen his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread and butter.

(2) FREDERICK LOCKER

[FREDERICK LOCKER, who in 1885 added his wife's name of Lampson to that of Locker, was born in 1821 in Greenwich Hospital, of which his father was then Commissioner. He was successively a clerk in Somerset House and the Admiralty, but retired from the public service in 1850. *London Lyrics*, his only book of original poems, appeared in 1857, and ten editions were issued in his lifetime. *Lyra Elegantiarum*, an anthology of light verse, was published in 1867, *Patchwork* in 1879, the catalogue of his "Rowfant Library" in 1886, and his autobiography, *My Confidences*, posthumously in 1896. He died at Rowfant, in Sussex, in 1895.]

Thackeray, as we have seen, was a singer of many moods. Frederick Locker, like Praed, whom he greatly admired and often imitated, was pre-eminently a writer of *vers de société*, and he is of importance in this context not only as a composer of many fascinating poems, but as an anthologist (in his *Lyra Elegantiarum*) and critic. He mingled in the world of fashion, and he knew almost everybody worth knowing in the world of letters. Thackeray invited him to contribute to the *Cornhill*, and he was an intimate friend of Tennyson. He was a man of fastidious and exquisite taste; he had humour, irony, and tenderness, but he lacked animal spirits, and, though generous in his appreciation of others—witness his enthusiastic praise of H. S. Leigh and of W. S. Gilbert as far back as 1870—was a relentless critic of his own work. His *London Lyrics*, as originally published in 1857, contained only twenty-six short pieces, but in the ten editions which appeared between that year and 1893 many new poems were added, and many of the older ones withdrawn or revised. But the revision was invariably an improvement; the Cockney

rhymes and puns disappeared, redundancies were excised, and the whole gained in terseness, simplicity, and point. In subject-matter he largely resembled Praed, and he tells us that at one time he tried to write like him; but his Praedian poems are the least successful—faint but graceful echoes of the brilliant antithetical rhetoric of his model. Locker had not gusto, the quality he admired in Suckling; his mood was in his own phrase "rueful-sweet," a mood at once whimsical and elegiac. He eschewed parody, but showed remarkable skill in his adaptation from the French, and in his handling of short metres, modelled probably on the seventeenth-century lyrists. A few trite Latin tags appear in his verses; but, unlike Calverley, he deals sparingly in literary allusions; he was neither a Latinist nor a Grecian, but he had a "naturally classical" mind, fortified by the study of the best English poetry and modern literature, and was eminently a scholarly poet though he made no parade of his learning. He was, in fine, a most accomplished miniaturist; the Cosway of Victorian light-verse writers.

My Mistress's Boots

She has dancing eyes and ruby lips,
Delightful boots—and away she skips.

They nearly strike me dumb,—
I tremble when they come
Pit-a-pat:
This palpitation means
These Boots are Geraldine's—
Think of that!

O, where did hunter win
So delicate a skin
For her feet?
You lucky little kid,
You perish'd, so you did,
For my Sweet.

The faery stitching gleams
On the sides, and in the seams,
And reveals

That the Pixies were the wags
Who tipt these funny tags,
And these heels.

What soles to charm an elf!—
Had Crusoe, sick of self,
Chanced to view
One printed near the tide,
O, how hard he would have tried
For the two!

For Gerry's debonair,
And innocent and fair
As a rose;
She's an Angel in a frock,—
She's an Angel with a clock
To her hose!

The simpletons who squeeze
Their pretty toes to please
Mandarins,
Would positively flinch
From venturing to pinch
Geraldine's!

Cinderella's *lefts and rights*
To Geraldine's were frights:
And I trow
The Damsel, deftly shod,
Has dutifully trod
Until now.

Come, Gerry, since it suits
Such a pretty Puss (in Boots)
These to don,
Set your dainty hand awhile
On my shoulder, Dear, and I'll
Put them on.

ALBURY, *June* 29, 1864.

The Rose and the Ring

She smiles, but her heart is in sable,
  Ay, sad as her Christmas is chill;
She reads, and her book is the Fable
  He penn'd for her while she was ill.
It is nine years ago since he wrought it,
  Where reedy old Tiber is king;
And chapter by chapter he brought it,—
  He read her *The Rose and the Ring.*

And when it was printed, and gaining
  Renown with all lovers of glee,
He sent her this copy containing
  His comical little *croquis;*
A sketch of a rather droll couple,
  She's pretty, he's quite t'other thing!
He begs (with a spine vastly supple)
  She will study *The Rose and the Ring.*

It pleased the kind Wizard to send her
  The last and the best of his Toys;
He aye had a sentiment tender
  For innocent maidens and boys:
And though he was great as a scorner,
  The guileless were safe from his sting:
How sad is past mirth to the mourner—
  A tear on *The Rose and the Ring.*

She reads; I may vainly endeavour
  Her mirth-chequer'd grief to pursue;
For she knows she has lost, and for ever,
  The Heart that was bared to so few;
But here, on the shrine of his glory,
  One poor little blossom I fling;—
And you see there's a nice little story
  Attach'd to *The Rose and the Ring.*[1]

[1] When writing *The Rose and the Ring* at Rome Thackeray used to go and read it to a little friend (the daughter of Story, the American sculptor) who was then lying ill.

A Reminiscence of Infancy

I recollect a nurse call'd Ann,
  Who carried me about the grass,
And one fine day a fine young man
  Came up, and kiss'd the pretty Lass:
She did not make the least objection!
    Thinks I, "Aha!
When I can talk I'll tell Mamma."
—And that's my earliest recollection.

(3) C. S. CALVERLEY

[Charles Stuart Calverley—the family had borne the name of Blayds since the beginning of the century, but resumed their old name of Calverley when C. S. C. was one-and-twenty—was born in 1831. From Harrow he went with a scholarship to Balliol, and won the University Prize for a Latin poem; but subsequently migrated to Christ's College, Cambridge, took a high place in the Classical Tripos, and was elected Fellow of his College. His published works consist of *Verses and Translations*, *Fly Leaves*, and two volumes of translations. He was called to the Bar, but while still a young man was incapacitated by a severe skating accident from pursuing his career or engaging in literary work. He died in 1884.]

Of the three "beloved Cambridge Rhymers"—Calverley, J. K. Stephen, and A. C. Hilton—who adorned and enlivened English *belles lettres* by their wit and humour in the last half of the nineteenth century, Calverley stood first in time, in equipment, and in achievement. We have the testimony of Dr. Butler, who sat next him in the Sixth at Harrow, and of Sir John Seeley, who lived with him on terms of unbroken intimacy at Cambridge, that as a young man he was not widely read and that his stock of acquired knowledge was small. But he seemed to "know without reading;" he had a wonderful memory, a singularly catholic taste, and an "exquisite and severe appreciation of classical form and rhythm." His favourite studies at Harrow were *Pickwick* and Virgil. But while his knowledge of Dickens was extensive and peculiar, he was equally devoted to Thackeray, who, according to

Seeley, was his favourite English author. In style, he was most influenced by Virgil, and probably Milton; but his audacity was always restrained by a perfect taste, and he thus presented the engaging spectacle of a humorist who divorced scholarship from pedantry and combined reverence for form—and good form—with complete unconventionality of outlook. He owed little to his forerunners in the *genre* in which he became famous, but there are many lines in Canning which foreshadow Calverley's peculiar genius for sudden absurdity, notably the couplet:

> "The feathered tribe with pinions cleave the air;
> Not so the mackerel, and still less the bear."

Calverley's fondness for unexpected effects had a physical parallel in his passion as a boy and a young man for taking extraordinary jumps, especially if he did not know where he would alight on the other side of the obstacle. On one memorable occasion, recorded by Dr. Butler, he lit on his head, but was none the worse—and one may say the same of most of the violent transitions in his verses. At any rate no one suffered but himself. The perfect good temper that endeared him to his friends never failed him in his most critical moods. If, as it has been said of him, he shows more intellectual affinity to the auther of *The Rape of the Lock* than to the author of *The Excursion*, he was entirely free from the spiteful venom of Pope. His mockery was never disfigured by malice. He made no enemies even among those of the *genus irritabile* whom he ridiculed for their morbibity, their obscurity, or their sentimentality. His function was that of a caricaturist rather than that of a satirist, but it was backed by sound criticism and common sense. Sir John Seeley tells us that "to him all people were curious and ridiculous," but they were never contemptible.

Of *vers de société* in the strict sense there is little in the work of Calverley. He was not unsocial, but his Muse had little traffic with Mayfair; he was not a follower of Praed or a rival of Locker. But though his unsophisticated intellect could not put up with rules or "the pretty Decalogue of Mode," he was, in spite of a brief period of acute conflict with authority at Oxford, neither a Bohemian nor a rebel. As one of his most intimate friends says, "he entered into and enjoyed much of what he ridiculed." He had great gifts but no ambition. "It was his love to saunter along the high road of life," an amused onlooker of the follies of mortals, but with a deep reverence, at the back of all his freakishness for

all that was honest and lovely and of good report. This underlying seriousness sometimes emerges in his verse, notably in the beautiful concluding stanzas of *Dover to Munich*, and it is worthy of note that those who knew him best were men of serious aims and high ideals who loved the man even more than they admired his gifts. The secret of his charm is hard to define. The element of surprise was seldom lacking, and surprise is of the essence of recreation. Again, in the words of the Latin epitaph, *neminem tristem fecit.* He had the joyous intrepidity and the reckless gaiety of boyhood along with the ripe and curious felicity of the trained scholar, the dashing ease of the brilliant amateur, and the calculated elegance of the fastidious artist. These qualities have earned for him an enduring place among writers of humorous verse, apart from the special service which he rendered in the domain of parody. What Jeffrey said, in his review of *Rejected Addresses*, of the higher functions of literary travesty as revealed by the brothers Smith, applies with even greater force to Calverley. His essays in this *genre* were few in number but of supreme excellence, for they not only showed an unerring instinct for pillorying mannerisms, but an extraordinary gift of impersonation—of assuming the mental habit of the writer. With him parody ceased to be a crude mechanical exercise in verbal substitution, and became a legitimate weapon of criticism, as it has remained ever since in the hands of its best exponents.

Gemini and Virgo

Some vast amount of years ago,
  Ere all my youth had vanish'd from me,
A boy it was my lot to know,
  Whom his familiar friends called Tommy.

I love to gaze upon a child;
  A young bud bursting into blossom;
Artless, as Eve yet unbeguiled,
  And agile as a young opossum:

And such was he. A calm-brow'd lad,
  Yet mad, at moments, as a hatter:
Why hatters as a race are mad
  I never knew, nor does it matter.

He was what nurses call a "limb";
One of those small misguided creatures,
Who, tho' their intellects are dim,
Are one too many for their teachers.

And, if you asked of him to say
What twice 10 was, or 3 times 7,
He'd glance (in quite a placid way)
From heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

And smile, and look politely round,
To catch a casual suggestion;
But make no effort to propound
Any solution of the question.

And so not much esteemed was he
Of the authorities: and therefore
He fraternized by chance with me,
Needing a somebody to care for:

And three fair summers did we twain
Live (as they say) and love together;
And bore by turns the wholesome cane
Till our young skins became as leather:

And carved our names on every desk,
And tore our clothes, and inked our collars;
And looked unique and picturesque,
But not, it may be, model scholars.

We did much as we chose to do;
We'd never heard of Mrs. Grundy;
All the theology we knew
Was that we mightn't play on Sunday;

And all the general truths, that cakes
Were to be bought at four a penny,
And that excruciating aches
Resulted if we ate too many;

And seeing ignorance is bliss,
  And wisdom consequently folly,
The obvious result is this—
  That our two lives were very jolly.

At last the separation came.
  Real love, at that time, was the fashion;
And by a horrid chance, the same
  Young thing was, to us both, a passion.

Old POSER snorted like a horse:
  His feet were large, his hands were pimply,
His manner, when excited, coarse:—
  But Miss P. was an angel simply.

She was a blushing gushing thing;
  All—more than all—my fancy painted;
Once—when she helped me to a wing
  Of goose—I thought I should have fainted.

The people said that she was blue:
  But I was green, and loved her dearly.
She was approaching thirty-two;
  And I was then eleven, nearly.

I did not love as others do;
  (None ever did that I've heard tell of;)
My passion was a byword through
  The town she was, of course, the belle of.

Oh sweet—as to the toilworn man
  The far-off sound of rippling river;
As to cadets in Hindostan
  The fleeting remnant of their liver—

To me was ANNA; dear as gold
  That fills the miser's sunless coffers;
As to the spinster, growing old,
  The thought—the dream—that she had offers.

I'd sent her little gifts of fruit;
I'd written lines to her as Venus;
I'd sworn unflinchingly to shoot
The man who dared to come between us:

And it was you, my Thomas, you,
The friend in whom my soul confided,
Who dared to gaze on her—to do,
I may say, much the same as I did.

One night, I *saw* him squeeze her hand;
There was no doubt about the matter;
I said he must resign, or stand
My vengeance—and he chose the latter.

We met, we "planted" blows on blows:
We fought as long as we were able:
My rival had a bottle-nose,
And both my speaking eyes were sable.

When the school-bell cut short our strife,
Miss P. gave both of us a plaster;
And in a week became the wife
Of Horace Nibbs, the writing-master.

* * * * * *

I loved her then—I'd love her still,
Only one must not love Another's:
But thou and I, my Tommy, will,
When we again meet, meet as brothers.

It may be that in age one seeks
Peace only: that the blood is brisker
In boys' veins, than in theirs whose cheeks
Are partially obscured by whisker;

Or that the growing ages steal
The memories of past wrongs from us.
But this is certain—that I feel
Most friendly unto thee, oh Thomas!

And whereso'er we meet again,
  On this or that side the Equator,
If I've not turned teetotaller then,
  And have wherewith to pay the waiter,

To thee I'll drain the modest cup,
  Ignite with thee the mild Havannah;
And we will waft, while liquoring up,
  Forgiveness to the heartless ANNA.

WANDERERS

As o'er the hill we roam'd at will,
  My dog and I together,
We mark'd a chaise, by two bright bays
  Slow-moved along the heather:

Two bays arch neck'd, with tails erect
  And gold upon their blinkers;
And by their side an ass I spied;
  It was a travelling tinker's.

The chaise went by, nor aught cared I;
  Such things are not in my way:
I turn'd me to the tinker, who
  Was loafing down a by-way:

I ask'd him where he lived—a stare
  Was all I got in answer,
As on he trudged: I rightly judged
  The stare said, "Where I can, sir."

I ask'd him if he'd take a whiff
  Of 'bacco; he acceded;
He grew communicative too,
  (A pipe was all he needed,)
Till of the tinker's life, I think,
  I knew as much as he did.

"I loiter down by thorp and town;
For any job I'm willing;
Take here and there a dusty brown,
And here and there a shilling.

"I deal in every ware in turn,
I've rings for buddin' Sally
That sparkle like those eyes of her'n;
I've liquor for the valet.

"I steal from th' parson's strawberry-plots,
I hide by th' squire's covers;
I teach the sweet young housemaids what's
The art of trapping lovers.

"The things I've done 'neath moon and stars
Have got me into messes:
I've seen the sky through prison bars,
I've torn up prison dresses:

"I've sat, I've sigh'd, I've gloom'd, I've glanced
With envy at the swallows
That through the window slid, and danced
(Quite happy) round the gallows;

"But out again I come, and show
My face nor care a stiver,
For trades are brisk and trades are slow,
But mine goes on for ever."

Thus on he prattled like a babbling brook.
Then I, "The sun hath slipt behind the hill,
And my aunt Vivian dines at half-past six."
So in all love we parted; I to the Hall,
They to the village. It was noised next noon
That chickens had been miss'd at Syllabub Farm.

(4) J. K. STEPHEN

[James Kenneth Stephen, the second son of Sir James FitzJames Stephen, the Judge, was born in 1859 and educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, where he was elected a Fellow. His only published works were two small volumes of verse, *Lapsus Calami* and *Quo Musa Tendis?* (1891). He died in 1892, the ultimate cause of death being an accidental blow on the head some five years before.]

The resemblances between Calverley and "J. K. S." (James Kenneth Stephen) are so marked as to warrant a slight deviation from chronological order. Stephen was also a brilliant public school boy who had a distinguished academic career at Cambridge. He was, moreover, an avowed disciple and devoted admirer of Calverley, as may be gathered from the delightful stanzas *To C. S. C.* But though related by education and environment, the two men differed widely in temperament. Calverley was more freakish and irresponsible: he had greater charm, elasticity, and geniality. He was never angry, and Stephen often was, though to excellent purpose, in his diatribes against those who desecrated the river, vulgar Cockney or oversea tourists, and pretentious politicians. Stephen was less of the amused onlooker, more of the castigator. But he, too, trod the beaten way: he was neither a mystic nor a metaphysician, but a man of robust intelligence who hated cant, pretence, and sentimentality, but was capable of generous emotion and even tenderness. He called himself "a man of prose," but there are lines in the stanzas *To A. H. C.*, when he compares the futility of abstract speculation with the things that really count, which only a poet could have written; while as a parodist he fell little short of his master.

A Parodist's Apology

If I've dared to laugh at you, Robert Browning,
'Tis with eyes that with you have often wept:
You have oftener left me smiling or frowning,
Than any beside, one bard except.

But once you spoke to me, storm-tongued poet,
A trivial word in an idle hour;
But thrice I looked on your face and the glow it
Bore from the flame of the inward power.

But you'd many a friend you never knew of,
Your words lie hid in a hundred hearts,
And thousands of hands that you've grasped but few of
Would be raised to shield you from slander's darts.

For you lived in the sight of the land that owned you,
You faced the trial, and stood the test:
They have piled you a cairn that would fain have stoned you:
You have spoken your message and earned your rest.

Parker's Piece, May 19, 1891

To see good *Tennis!* what diviner joy
Can fill our leisure, or our minds employ?
Not *Sylvia's* self is more supremely fair,
Than balls that hurtle through the conscious air.
Not *Stella's* form instinct with truer grace
Than *Lambert's* racket poised to win the *chase.*
Not *Chloe's* harp more native to the ear,
Than the tense strings which smite the flying sphere.
When *Lambert boasts* the superhuman *force,*
Or splits the echoing *grille* without remorse:
When *Harradine,* as graceful as of yore,
Wins *better than a yard,* upon the floor;
When *Alfred's* ringing cheer proclaims success,
Or *Saunders volleys* in resistlessness;
When *Heathcote's service* makes the *dedans* ring
With just applause, and own its honoured king;
When *Pettitt's* prowess all our zeal awoke
'Till high Olympus shuddered at the stroke;
Or, when, receiving *thirty and the floor,*
The novice *serves* a dozen *faults* or more;
Or some plump don, perspiring and profane,
Assails the roof and breaks the exalted pane;
When *vantage, five games all, the door* is called,
And Europe pauses, breathless and appalled,
Till lo! the ball by cunning hand caressed
Finds in the *winning gallery* a nest;
These are the moments, this the bliss supreme,
Which makes the artist's joy, the poet's dream.

Let *cricketers* await the tardy sun,
Break one another's shins and call it fun;
Let *Scotia's golfers* through the affrighted land
With crooked knee and glaring eye-ball stand;
Let *football* rowdies show their straining thews,
And tell their triumphs to a mud-stained Muse;
Let *india-rubber* pellets dance on *grass*
Where female arts the ruder sex surpass;
Let other people play at other things;
The *king of games* is still the *game of kings*.

(5) A. C. HILTON

[Arthur Clement Hilton was born at Banbury in 1851, and educated at Marlborough College and St. John's College, Cambridge. The *Light Green*, a burlesque magazine for which he was chiefly responsible, appeared at Cambridge in 1872. Ordained in 1874, he became curate at Sandwich, where he died in 1877.]

The three Cambridge poets all died young, Calverley at fifty-three, J. K. Stephen at thirty-three, and Arthur Clement Hilton at twenty-six. Hilton never reached the Sixth at Marlborough, and only took a pass degree at Cambridge, but his school and University record is not a fair index of his accomplishments. He had a genuine love of literature and archæology, wrote clever verses as a boy, and excelled as an actor. Still, his early efforts gave little inkling of the real genius for parody revealed in the *Light Green*, a burlesque magazine—the title of which was suggested by a short-lived Oxford periodical called the *Dark Blue*—two numbers of which appeared in the May Term of 1872. Hilton wrote the great bulk of the contents, and all the best things are from his pen. Some of the wittiest verses—notably the delicious burlesque version of Tennyson's *May Queen*—are too rich in undergraduate references to appeal to the general public, but an exception must be made in favour of *The Heathen Pass-ee*, in which Hilton achieved the difficult task of rewriting a famous humorous poem, and equalling the humour of the original. As for the *Octopus*, it is generally admitted to be the best of all the innumerable parodies of Swinburne in the *Dolores* vein and stanza. It is a perfect caricature alike of the metrical excesses and the

violent voluptuousness of the original. Hilton wrote a few light farcical plays, including his amusing *Hamlet: or Not such a Fool as he Looks*—which students of burlesque may like to compare with Gilbert's admirable *Rosencrantz* and *Guilderstern*—and some graceful verses of a graver cast, but his best work is to be found in the *Light Green*. Like not a few humorists, he had a deep underlying vein of seriousness, and taking Orders at the earliest possible age spent the last three years of his short life as a hard-working curate at Sandwich.

Octopus [1]

By Algernon Charles Sin-burn

Strange beauty, eight-limbed and eight-handed,
  Whence camest to dazzle our eyes?
With thy bosom bespangled and banded
  With the hues of the seas and the skies;
Is thy home European or Asian,
  O mystical monster marine?
Part molluscous and partly crustacean,
  Betwixt and between.

Wast thou born to the sound of sea trumpets?
  Hast thou eaten and drunk to excess
Of the sponges—thy muffins and crumpets,
  Of the seaweed—thy mustard and cress?
Wast thou nurtured in caverns of coral,
  Remote from reproof or restraint?
Art thou innocent, art thou immoral,
  Sinburnian or Saint?

Lithe limbs, curling free, as a creeper
  That creeps in a desolate place,
To enroll and envelop the sleeper
  In a silent and stealthy embrace,
Cruel beak craning forward to bite us,
  Our juices to drain and to drink,
Or to whelm us in waves of Cocytus,
  Indelible ink!

[1] Written at the Crystal Palace Aquarium.

O breast, that 'twere rapture to writhe on!
O arms 'twere delicious to feel
Clinging close with the crush of the Python,
When she maketh her murderous meal!
In thy eight-fold embraces enfolden,
Let our empty existence escape;
Give us death that is glorious and golden,
Crushed all out of shape!

Ah! thy red lips, lascivious and luscious,
With death in their amorous kiss,
Cling round us, and clasp us, and crush us,
With bitings of agonised bliss;
We are sick with the poison of pleasure,
Dispense us the potion of pain;
Ope thy mouth to its uttermost measure
And bite us again!

(6) W. S. GILBERT

[William Schwenck Gilbert was born in London in 1836, educated at London University, held a clerkship in the Privy Council Office from 1857 to 1862, and was called to the Bar in 1864. He began to write for the stage in 1866, his best-known plays being *The Palace of Truth* (1870), *Pygmalion and Galatea* (1871), *The Wicked World* (1873), *Sweethearts* (1874). To the earlier part of this period belong his *Bab Ballads*, many of which appeared in *Fun*. His famous partnership with Sir Arthur Sullivan was formed in 1875, and led to a long series of briliantly successful comic operas, beginning with *Trial by Jury* and including *The Sorcerer*, *H. M. S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Patience*, and *The Mikado*. Knighted in 1907, he died in May, 1911, from heart failure "brought on by over-exertion while saving a young lady from drowning."

W. S. Gilbert, the last of the writers of light verse who comes within our survey, was only five years younger than Calverley, but he outlived all the Cambridge poets noticed above, and was writing for at least twenty years after the death of A. C. Hilton. There is thus excuse for discussing him out of his strict order, and there are literary reasons as well. Locker compares him with the authors of *Rejected Addresses*, but it is not easy to see the affinity. In his feats of rhyming he recalls Barham, but he certainly owed

nothing to Praed. His first success was achieved with the *Bab Ballads*, begun with *The Yarn of the "Nancy Bell,"* which was declined by *Punch* as "too cannibalistic," but which revealed a distinctly new vein of extravagance. There are some critics who think that the *Bab Ballads* are his best work, and it is worthy of note that the plots of more than one of his comic operas are to be found in them. But there is no questioning the fact that his most enduring claim to remembrance rests on his achievements as a librettist. In this domain he improved so much on his forerunners that he founded a new school, of which he remains the most accomplished and popular representative. He had cherished other ambitions, and intermittently tried his fortune as a writer of serious or fantastico-romantic plays; but he will be remembered as the author of the *Bab Ballads* and the "books" of *Trial by Jury*, *The Sorcerer*, *The Mikado*, *Patience*, *H. M. S. Pinafore*, and half a dozen other comic operas, in which the collaboration of librettist and composer was so close and illustrative that, as has been said, they form a sort of musical *Punch* for the last twenty years or so of the nineteenth century. One cannot think of Sullivan's tunes without Gilbert's words, or of Gilbert's words without Sullivan's music. And if he was not a poet in that he lacked supreme distinction of style, fervour, and magic, he was a wonderful craftsman, a most ingenious rhymer, and a great phrase-coiner. In a recently published Dictionary of Quotations he is credited with no fewer than seventy entries—Mr. Gladstone, who stands next in alphabetical order, has only eight. Many of Gilbert's are still in use, and some (e. g. the admirable estimate of the House of Lords who "did nothing in particular and did it very well," or his crystallization of the party system as a congenial attribute of every British boy and girl, or his statement of the credentials of a ruler of the "Queen's Navee") have passed into proverbs. They represent in a condensed form the cynical wisdom of the plain man. His verse was not sensuous or passionate, but it was simple, intelligible, and eminently quotable. He appealed to the plain man by his complete avoidance of all poetic inversions, and his faithful adherence to the order of good colloquial speech. He was, in the famous phrase which he himself applied to the Hamlet of a well-known actor, "funny without being vulgar," though his taste was not always impeccable. His "madrigals" and songs, though deft in workmanship, are conventional and frigid in sentiment. And his peculiar quality of topsy-turvydom, which has perhaps added

the word "Gilbertian" to the language, was sometimes too mechanical and calculated to be effective. It is only right to add that he sometimes prophesied better than he knew, as in the instance of the Duke of Plaza Toro who converted himself into a limited liability company. But when all deductions are made, Gilbert's contribution to the gaiety of the nation and the diversion of those who, in Johnson's phrase, are afraid to sit at home and think, was perhaps larger than that of any of his contemporaries.

Ellen M'Jones Aberdeen

[From the *Bab Ballads*]

Macphairson Clonglocketty Angus M'Clan
Was the son of an elderly labouring man,
You've guessed him a Scotchman, shrewd reader, at sight,
And p'raps altogether, shrewd reader, you're right.

From the bonnie blue Forth to the hills of Deeside,
Round by Dingwall and Wrath to the mouth of the Clyde,
There wasn't a child or a woman or man
Who could pipe with Clonglocketty Angus M'Clan.

No other could wake such detestable groans,
With reed and with chaunter—with bag and with drones:
All day and all night he delighted the chiels
With sniggering pibrochs and jiggety reels.

He'd clamber a mountain and squat on the ground,
And the neighbouring maidens would gather around
To list to his pipes and to gaze in his e'en,
Especially Ellen M'Jones Aberdeen.

All loved their M'Clan, save a Sassenach brute,
Who came to the Highlands to fish and to shoot;
He dressed himself up in a Highlander way,
Though his name it was Pattison Corby Torbay.

Torbay had incurred a good deal of expense
To make him a Scotchman in every sense;
But this is a matter, you'll readily own,
That isn't a question of tailors alone.

A Sassenach chief may be bonily built,
He may purchase a sporran, a bonnet, and kilt;
Stick a skean in his hose—wear an acre of stripes—
But he cannot assume an affection for pipes.

CLONGLOCKETTY'S pipings all night and all day
Quite frenzied poor PATTISON CORBY TORBAY;
The girls were amused at his singular spleen,
Especially ELLEN M'JONES ABERDEEN.

"MACPHAIRSON CLONGLOCKETTY ANGUS, my lad,
With pibrochs and reels you are driving me mad;
If you really must play on that cursed affair,
My goodness! play something resembling an air."

Boiled over the blood of MACPHAIRSON M'CLAN—
The clan of Clonglocketty rose as one man;
For all were enraged at the insult, I ween—
Especially ELLEN M'JONES ABERDEEN.

"Let's show," said M'CLAN, "to this Sassenach loon
That the bagpipes can play him a regular tune.
Let's see," said M'CLAN, as he thoughtfully sat,
"'*In My Cottage*' is easy—I'll practise at that."

He blew at his "Cottage," and blew with a will,
For a year, seven months, and a fortnight, until
(You'll hardly believe it) M'CLAN, I declare,
Elicited something resembling an air.

It was wild—it was fitful—as wild as the breeze—
It wandered about into several keys;
It was jerky, spasmodic, and harsh, I'm aware,
But still it distinctly suggested an air.

The Sassenach screamed, and the Sassenach danced,
He shrieked in his agony—bellowed and pranced;
And the maidens who gathered rejoiced at the scene,
Especially ELLEN M'JONES ABERDEEN.

"Hech gather, hech gather, hech gather around;
And fill a' yer lugs wi' the exquisite sound.
An air frae the bagpipes—beat that if ye can!
Hurrah for CLONGLOCKETTY ANGUS M'CLAN!"

The fame of his piping spread over the land:
Respectable widows proposed for his hand,
And maidens came flocking to sit on the green—
Especially ELLEN M'JONES ABERDEEN.

One morning the fidgety Sassenach swore
He'd stand it no longer—he drew his claymore,
And (this was, I think, in extremely bad taste),
Divided CLONGLOCKETTY close to the waist.

Oh! loud were the wailings for ANGUS M'CLAN—
Oh! deep was the grief for that excellent man—
The maids stood aghast at the horrible scene,
Especially ELLEN M'JONES ABERDEEN.

It sorrowed poor PATTISON CORBY TORBAY
To find them "take on" in this serious way,
He pitied the poor little fluttering birds,
And solaced their souls with the following words:—

"Oh, maidens," said PATTISON, touching his hat,
"Don't snivel, my dears, for a fellow like that:
Observe, I'm a very superior man,
A much better fellow than ANGUS M'CLAN."

They smiled when he winked and addressed them as "dears,"
And they all of them vowed, as they dried up their tears,
A pleasanter gentleman never was seen—
Especially ELLEN M'JONES ABERDEEN.

The Judge's Song

[From *Trial by Jury*]

When I, good friends, was called to the Bar,
I'd an appetite fresh and hearty,
But I was, as many young barristers are,
An impecunious party.
I'd a swallow-tail coat of a beautiful blue—
A brief which was brought by a booby—
A couple of shirts and a collar or two,
And a ring that looked like a ruby!

In Westminster Hall I danced a dance,
Like a semi-despondent fury;
For I thought I should never hit on a chance
Of addressing a British Jury—
But I soon got tired of third-class journeys,
And dinners of bread and water;
So I fell in love with a rich attorney's
Elderly, ugly daughter.

The rich attorney, he wiped his eyes,
And replied to my fond professions:
"You shall reap the reward of your enterprise,
At the Bailey and Middlesex Sessions.
You'll soon get used to her looks," said he,
"And a very nice girl you'll find her—
She may very well pass for forty-three
In the dusk, with a light behind her!"

The rich attorney was as good as his word:
The briefs came trooping gaily,
And every day my voice was heard
At the Sessions or Ancient Bailey.
All thieves who could my fees afford
Relied on my orations,
And many a burglar I've restored
To his friends and his relations.

At length I became as rich as the GURNEYS—
An incubus then I thought her,
So I threw over that rich attorney's
Elderly, ugly daughter.
The rich attorney my character high
Tried vainly to disparage—
And now, if you please, I'm ready to try
This Breach of Promise of Marriage!

THE POLICEMAN'S LOT

[From *The Pirates of Penzance*]

When a felon's not engaged in his employment,
Or maturing his felonious little plans,
His capacity for innocent enjoyment
Is just as great as any honest man's.
Our feelings we with difficulty smother
When constabulary duty's to be done:
Ah, take one consideration with another,
A policeman's lot is not a happy one!

When the enterprising burglar's not a-burgling,
When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime,
He loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling,
And listen to the merry village chime.
When the coster's finished jumping on his mother,
He loves to lie a-basking in the sun:
Ah, take one consideration with another,
The policeman's lot is not a happy one!

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

[BORN at Summertown, near Oxford, July 28, 1864: eldest son of Stephen Phillips, D. D; Precentor and Hon. Canon of Peterborough. Educated at the Grammar School, Stratford-on-Avon, and Oundle School: was intended for the civil service but took to the stage, joining the travelling company of his cousin F. R. Benson. He had a genius for poetic reading and recitation, but small talent as an actor. Leaving the stage he joined the staff of an Army tutor near London. After a few experimental volumes of verse (*Primavera*, 1890; *Eremus*, 1894; *Christ in Hades*, 1896) he gained sudden reputation and success on being awarded in 1897 a prize for the best volume of poems of the year offered by the proprietors of *The Academy*. The volume included one of his finest things, *Marpessa*, and won immediate popularity, as did several of the poetical dramas which soon afterwards he wrote for the stage. Then the critical fashion changed; nor were his later works up to the standard of their predecessors. He continued to produce both dramas and volumes of occasional verse, and died at Hastings, December 9, 1915. The list of his published writings after the *Poems* of 1897 is as follows: *Paolo and Francesca*, 1899; *Herod*, 1900; *Ulysses*, 1902; *New Poems*, 1903; *The Sin of David*, 1904; *Nero*, 1906; *The Last Heir* (drama), 1908; *Pietro of Siena*, 1910; *The New Inferno*, 1910; *The King*, 1912; *Lyrics and Dramas*, 1913; *Iole*, 1913; *Armageddon*, 1915; *Panama*, 1915.]

In regard to this poet the critical pendulum had for some years before his death swung sharply from the side of over-praise to that of over-neglect. It will some day recover its equilibrium, and Phillips will then be recognized as having belonged, by the gift of passion ("the all-in-all in poetry," as Lamb has it,) by natural largeness of style and pomp and melody of rhythm and diction, as well as by intensity of imaginative vision in those fields where his imagination was really awake, to the great lineage and high tradition of English poetry. Yes, too directly to the lineage and too faithfully to the tradition, the *advocatus diaboli* may interpose. It has been especially charged against him that his blank verse too closely reproduces the cadences of Milton and of Tennyson. But this is to mistake absorption, which is one thing,

for imitation, which is quite another. It is true that he was nc great metrical inventor or innovator, though some of his experiments in unrhymed lyric—for instance, *A Gleam* and *The Revealed Madonna* cited below—are to my mind among the most successful that have been tried in English. But he was able to stamp an individuality, strong though not revolutionary or eccentric, on blank verse whether narrative or dramatic, on the closed "heroic" couplet, that form almost disused since the romantic revival, and on such ancient and popular never-to-be-worn out measures as the familiar alternately rhyming eight-and six. As to originality not of form but of matter, it may be observed that when Phillips chose to rehandle themes on which predecessors, even the greatest, had set their mark, so far from imitating, he for better or worse always attacked them according to conceptions of his own. His *Endymion*, a thing over-mannered and far from first-rate, is in conception and treatment wholly independent of Keats. Other good cases in point are the two short pieces, *The Parting of Launcelot and Guinevere*, a Tennysonian theme wrought without Tennyson's cunning technique but with an intensity of passion beyond his reach, and the admirably vivid tragic vision of Beatrice Cenci in the little lyric so named, which might have been written just as it is had Shelley not existed.

Other criticisms directed against Phillips's work have more foundation than the charge of imitativeness. He worked more by gusts of inspiration than by sustained care in craftsmanship, and often allowed a lax or feeble line to intrude even into his finest passages. He was also too prone to self-repetition and to that form of poetical rhetoric which consists in trying to reinforce an idea or heighten an image by rewording it over again with no essential change of thought.

Subject to these besetting flaws, he has left achievements of striking personality and power in a wide range of themes. In handling the simple, direct, universal human joys and sorrows, the longings and regrets, connected with the sexual and conjugal, the parental and filial relations, his touch is often as new and revealing as it is tender. For the sense of the past in the present, the stirrings of far-off legendary association, the apprehension of vibrating cosmic sympathies between the external universe and man aroused in the human spirit in moments of emotional tension or tragic passion—for these he found forms of utterance which were beautiful and entirely his own. Themes of mystical religion

and gropings beyond the grave were never far from his thoughts and inspired much of his work, to my mind rarely of his best, from *Christ in Hades* down to *The New Inferno*. There is a distressful power and sadness, a sadness sometimes rising to the pitch of agony, in some poems of personal confession and supplication forced upon him by the struggle against enemies within himself stronger than he could resist.

Passing to work done in more objective moods, he has left some presenting with true power and originality impressions of character and destiny among crushed and suffering city lives. His surface observation both of the crowd and individuals was intense: his divination and suggestion of histories behind the surface imaginative and penetrating: *The Fireman* and *The Revealed Madonna* are the only specimens in these veins for which I have found space. In his later years he was accustomed to take poetic note of the changing aspects brought into the world by the progress of mechanical invention, the disappearance of sails from the sea, the invasion of the sky by aëroplanes and the like. Such notes, adroitly and tellingly written as they often are, hardly rise sufficiently above the level of newspaper verse to survive for their own sake as poetry, though they will be of interest in retrospect as marking the effect of these changes on a powerful and sensitive spirit in their day.

So far I have said nothing of the dramas which after the year 1900 absorbed most of Phillips's energies and constitute by far the chief bulk of his work. His later attempts in that form, *Iole*, *The Adversary*, *The King*, and *Armageddon*, may, I think, be dismissed as giving evidence of exhausted faculties and containing only here and there a phrase or line or two of the old power. *Faust* was a collaboration piece and made small pretension to originality. There remain the five, *Paolo and Francesca*, *Herod*, *Ulysses*, *Nero*, and *The Sin of David*. Several of these have proved successful on the stage: all have scenes and passages of stirring beauty and power. It has been objected to them that the poet, having been an actor and working with actors, has constructed his plays with too obvious and mechanical a stagecraft; that they are weak in the elements of character creation; that the persons are not made to speak vitally from within, but to describe and expound themselves in speeches put into their mouths from without, as it were decoratively and artificially; that the speeches themselves are too rhetorical, and the rhetoric often too ornate and flowery and sometimes redundant

and tautological. Against this it may justly be urged that, after all, knowledge of stagecraft is a good thing in a playwright, and that Phillips's aim in drama was intended to be on Greek lines much rather than on Shakespearian: that the intense, the Shakespearian individualization of characters has been no part of the aim, still less of the achievement, of tragic drama in some of the great literatures of the world,—it is not a capital element either in the Greek drama or the classical French: and again, that rhetoric in poetic drama there needs must be, and between the right and appropriate rhetoric of a situation, when it is touched with passion and imagination, as much of it in these plays truly is,—between such rhetoric and truly great dramatic poetry the line is difficult to draw, if it can be drawn at all.

In the following examples none are included from Phillips's dramatic work, and from his longer poems only one, a part of the forecast by which Marpessa justifies her choice of her mortal lover Idas against her divine lover Apollo. The other specimens are complete short pieces chosen, so far as was possible within the necessary limits of space, to illustrate the range and varieties of the poet's manner.

SIDNEY COLVIN.

MARPESSA [1]

"But if I live with Idas, then we two
On the low earth shall prosper hand in hand
In odours of the open field, and live
In peaceful noises of the farm, and watch
The pastoral fields burned by the setting sun.
And he shall give me passionate children, not
Some radiant god that will despise me quite,
But clambering limbs and little hearts that err.
And I shall sleep beside him in the night,
And fearful from some dream shall touch his hand
Secure; or at some festival we two
Will wander through the lighted city streets;
And in the crowd I'll take his arm and feel
Him closer for the press. So shall we live.
And though the first sweet sting of love be past,

[1] Reprinted by permission of Stephen Phillips's publisher, John Lane Company. Copyright 1897 by John Lane and 1905 by John Lane Company.

The sweet that almost venom is; though youth,
With tender and extravagant delight,
The first and secret kiss by twilight hedge,
The insane farewell repeated o'er and o'er,
Pass off; there shall succeed a faithful peace;
Beautiful friendship tried by sun and wind,
Durable from the daily dust of life.
And though with sadder, still with kinder eyes,
We shall behold all frailties, we shall haste
To pardon, and with mellowing minds to bless.
Then though we must grow old, we shall grow old
Together, and he shall not greatly miss
My bloom faded, and waning light of eyes,
Too deeply gazed in ever to seem dim;
Nor shall we murmur at, nor much regret
The years that gently bend us to the ground,
And gradually incline our face; that we
Leisurely stooping, and with each slow step,
May curiously inspect our lasting home.
But we shall sit with luminous holy smiles,
Endeared by many griefs, by many a jest,
And custom sweet of living side by side;
And full of memories not unkindly glance
Upon each other. Last, we shall descend
Into the natural ground—not without tears—
One must go first, ah god! one must go first;
After so long one blow for both were good;
Still like old friends, glad to have met, and leave
Behind a wholesome memory on the earth.
And thou, beautiful god, in that far time,
When in thy setting sweet thou gazest down
On this grey head, wilt thou remember then
That once I pleased thee, that I once was young?"

A Poet's Prayer

That I have felt the rushing wind of Thee:
That I have run before Thy blast to sea;
That my one moment of transcendent strife
Is more than many years of listless life;
Beautiful Power, I praise Thee: yet I send

A prayer that sudden strength be not the end.
Desert me not when from my flagging sails
Thy breathing dies away, and virtue fails:
When Thou hast spent the glory of that gust,
Remember still the body of this dust.
Not then when I am boundless, without bars,
When I am rapt in hurry to the stars;
When I anticipate an endless bliss,
And feel before my time the final kiss,
Not then I need Thee: for delight is wise,
I err not in the freedom of the skies;
I fear not joy, so joy might ever be,
And rapture finish in felicity.
But when Thy joy is past; comes in the test,
To front the life that lingers after zest:
To live in mere negation of Thy light,
A more than blindless after more than sight.
'Tis not in flesh so swiftly to descend,
And sudden from the spheres with earth to blend;
And I, from splendour thrown, and dashed from dream,
Into the flare pursue the former gleam.
Sustain me in that hour with Thy left hand,
And aid me, when I cease to soar, to stand;
Make me Thy athlete even in my bed,
Thy girded runner though the course be sped;
Still to refrain that I may more bestow,
From sternness to a larger sweetness grow.
I ask not that false calm which many feign,
And call that peace which is a dearth of pain.
True calm doth quiver like the calmest star;
It is that white where all the colours are;
And for its very vestibule doth own
The tree of Jesus and the pyre of Joan.
Thither I press: but O do Thou meanwhile
Support me in privations of Thy smile.
Spaces Thou hast ordained the stars between
And silences where melody hath been:
Teach me those absences of fire to face,
And Thee no less in silence to embrace,
Else shall Thy dreadful gift still people Hell,
And men not measure from what height I fell.

The Fireman

(An impression of the street)

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
Hark his hoarse dispersing cry,
From his path asunder fly!
Speed! or men and women die,
For his foe is fire, fire!

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
He is armed and helmed in brass;
Let his thundering chargers pass;
Be the iron Strand as grass,
For their foe is fire, fire!

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
On he rushes as in gold,
Under him a chariot rolled,
As in Roman triumph old,
But his foe is fire, fire!

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
Red the vault above him reels,
Now the blistering stairway peels
But the battle-bliss he feels,
For his foe is fire, fire!

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
Up the ladder flies he light,
Disappears in dreadful night,
Now re-starts upon the sight,
Sudden out of fire, fire!

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
And no word the hero saith,
Only on his arm hath breath
Something between life and death,
Snatched from fire, fire, fire!

His foe is fire, fire, fire!
Bring him to the victor's car
Richer is his spoil of war,
Than from Roman battle far,
Who has triumphed over fire.

Penelope to Ulysses

Thou marvellest, husband, that I sit so mute
And motionless, but gazing on that face
Which now the pine-fire throws up in a flame,
Now leaves in darkest night as thou dost lean
Massily drooping toward the log-fed blaze.
Such silence has come down upon us two!
Yet a good silence after so long years.
We only are awake and the live sea!
But thou who hast borne all things may'st perhaps
Bear with a woman's fancies while she speaks them.
Think not, my man of men, that I am cold
In passion or heart! Far otherwise! I see,
And nothing else I see, the brow that took
The blow of strange waves and the furious kiss
Of different winds, the sad heaven-roaming eyes,
The mighty hands that piloted all night.
Yet art thou paler than my dream of thee.
Forgive me, O my lord, but I must speak.
Well—all these years have I imagimed thee
So constantly that now thy visible form,
How noble! seems but shadow of such sight.
For I have seen thee in the deep of night
Leap silent, sudden up the stair, and I
Fell toward thee in the darkness with a cry,
Fluttering upon thy bosom like a bird.
And I have seen thee spring upon this earth;
Then have I often just upon daybreak
Started and run down to the beach and heard
Thy boat grate on the pebbles: or again
It has been noon and thou hast come in arms
Over the sweet fields calling out my name.

Sometimes in tragic nights of surf and cloud
Thou hast been thrown headlong in howling wind
On the sharp coast and up the sea-bank streamed,
Alone. This then I strive to shape to words—
Thou hadst become with passing days and years,
With night and tempest, and with sun and sea,
A presence hovering in all lights and airs.
Thou wert the soul then of the evening star,
And thou didst roam heaven in the seeking moon,
Thou secretly wouldst speak from stirring leaves,
And what was dawn but some surprise of thee?
So, husband, though this heart beats wild at thee,
Yet lesser in imagination
Art thou returned than evermore returning.
Nature is but a body from henceforth,
The soul departed, the spirit gone of her.
The waves cry unintelligibly now,
That then "Ulysses" and "Ulysses" still
Hissed sweetly, privately, the livelong night.
Ah! but thou hear'st me not, canst only hear
A roar of memories, and for thee this house
Still plunges and takes the sea-spray evermore.
Yet come! How thou art weary none can tell,
How wise, how sad, how deaf to babbled words.
Yet come, and fold me, not as in old nights,
But now with perils kiss me, wind me round
With wonder, murmur magic in my ear,
And clasp me with the world, with nothing less!

Beatrice Cenci

Who stealeth from the turret-stair
In raiment white with streaming hair?
The moon is hid, the stars are pale,
The night-wind hath forgot to wail.
Like to a priestess seemeth she
Addressed to some dread ministry.
What solemn sacrifice or rite
Comes she to celebrate this night?
A deed of Hell, and yet of Heaven,

Into these slender hands is given;
Blood must she spill, but evil blood,
As evil as hath ever flowed.
Now enters she the moonlit room;
She sees a bed bright in the gloom,
Whereon an old man slumbers deep;
Ah, God, how well the wicked sleep!
But a faint breathing all she hears,
As silently the couch she nears.
Now the bright dagger at her breast
She plucks from out her maiden vest.
Why hesitates she? and a space
Uncertain stands above that face?
Is it some memory of youth,
That brings upon her heart this ruth?
Some far-off picture that she sees,
When she was dandled on his knees?
Is it the hair, so utter white,
Hair that should seem a holy sight?
Then the red shame leaps to her heart
And furious thoughts again upstart.
O'er him she leans; no eyelid he
Stirs as tho' warned of destiny.

What cry was that? A single cry,
That pierced the palace to the sky?
And then came down a silence deep,
Yet had each sleeper leapt from sleep,
And wandering lights and hurrying feet,
Hither and thither shadows fleet.
But she in silence pure and clean
Passed to her chamber all unseen.

The Parting of Launcelot and Guinevere

Into a high-walled nunnery had fled
Queen Guinevere, amid the shade to weep,
And to repent 'mid solemn boughs, and love
The cold globe of the moon; but now as she
Meekly the scarcely-breathing garden walked,
She saw, and stood, and swooned at Launcelot,
Who burned in sudden steel like a blue flame
Amid the cloister. Then, when she revived,
He came and looked on her: in the dark place
So pale her beauty was, the sweetness such
That he half-closed his eyes and deeply breathed;
And as he gazed, there came into his mind
That night of May, with pulsing stars, the strange
Perfumèd darkness, and delicious guilt
In silent hour; but at the last he said:
"Suffer me, lady, but to kiss thy lips
Once, and to go away for evermore."
But she replied, "Nay, I beseech thee, go!
Sweet were those kisses in the deep of night;
But from those kisses is this ruin come.
Sweet was thy touch, but now I wail at it,
And I have hope to see the face of Christ:
Many are saints in heaven who sinned as I."
Then said he, "Since it is thy will, I go."
But those that stood around could scarce endure
To see the dolour of these two; for he
Swooned in his burning armour to her face,
And both cried out as at the touch of spears:
And as two trees at midnight, when the breeze
Comes over them, now to each other bend,
And now withdraw; so mournfully these two
Still drooped together and still drew apart.
Then like one dead her ladies bore away
The heavy queen; and Launcelot went out
And through a forest weeping rode all night.

A Gleam!

Ah! You and I love our boy.
Such a warrior is he;
So splendid of limb, so swift and so joyous,
At his lightest word we touch each other and smile;
We watch him secretly, earnestly, out of the shadow,
Our eyes like angels attend him about the room.
Ah! You and I love our boy!
And yet when we wander out in the falling darkness,
When the glooming garden discloses her soul in dew,
In that hour of odour and longing,
Of voices ceasing in leaves,
When a human trouble arises from evening meadows,
A divine home-sickness from heaped grass,
Then I know that it is not of him you are thinking sorely,
But still you remember the other, the girl-child that vanished.
Scarce had we kissed her with awe, when she died:
We but named her, and lost her.
And they say to us, "Why, O why,
With yon beautiful boy in your sight,
Do ye still hark back to the other face that is fled?"
But because of her swiftness in passing,
Because she just smiled, and died;
She moveth us more than the other to tender thought,
And the wistful puzzle of tears.
I shall know, ere the sun arises,
By a sudden stirring of thee,
Or blind slight touch in the dark,
Or face upturned in quivering dream,
That your heart, like mine, has gone home in the hush to its dead,
Through dew and beginning birds;
Unto her hath returned,
Who dazzled, and left us to darkness,
But a beam, but a gleam!

The Revealed Madonna

As I stood in the tavern-reek, amid oaths and curses,
'Mid husbands entreated and drugged,
Amid mothers poisoned and still of the poison sipping,
Here harboured from storms of home;
For a moment the evil glare on a woman falling
Disclosed her with babe at her breast;
An instant she downward gazed on the babe that slumbered,
And holy the tavern grew,
For she gazed with the brooding look of the mother of Jesus,
On her lips the divine half-smile;
An instant she smiled; then the tavern reeled back hellward,
And I heard but the oath and the curse.[1]

[1] These poems are reprinted from Stephen Phillips's *Lyrics and Dramas* by permission of the John Lane Company, copyright 1913 by John Lane.

HON. EMILY LAWLESS

[Born in Ireland in 1845, the daughter of the third Lord Cloncurry. Much of her youth was passed in Ireland, in the country by the sea, where she developed to the full her remarkable powers of observation, whether of the animal and insect world or of human character. She wrote various scientific papers, and in 1886 published her first novel, *Hurrish*, which was followed by five or six others, by *A Garden Diary* (1901), and by a volume of poems, *With the Wild Geese* (1902). Her last years were spent in England: she died October 21, 1913.]

It was as a delightful novelist that Emily Lawless first became known to the world. In the two studies of peasant life in Western Ireland, *Hurrish* and *Grania*, she embodied her own close and tender knowledge of the Clare and Galway country—its landscape, its people, its laughter, its tragedies, and all its wild natural life; while in the two historical novels or quasi-novels of *Maelcho* and *With Essex in Ireland*, she brought imagination, and a passionate sympathy, to bear on the historical wrongs and miseries of the land she loved. She belonged to one of the Anglo-Irish families, who represent in that tormented country the only fusion so far attained there between the English and Irish tempers. Her grandfather was imprisoned in the Tower in 1798 for complicity with the United Irish conspiracy, but the ex-rebel ended his days as an English peer, the husband of a Scottish wife, and an enlightened landowner in Kildare, devoted to the interests of his tenantry and estates. Down to the last generation the family was Catholic, and kinsmen of Emily Lawless had fought valiantly for Catholic emancipation and hotly opposed the Union. A Lawless—probably of her blood—became a member of the latest Irish Legion fighting for France, on his escape from Ireland after the collapse of the rebellion of '98. In spite, therefore, of her many English friends and connexions, Emily Lawless was by nature and feeling a patriotic Irishwoman, with a full share of Irish humour and Irish poetry. Her childhood and youth were passed in a free open-air life, now among the woods and fields of Mid Ireland, now by the sea. She became a considerable naturalist, a great reader, and a dreamer whose dreams took shape, at first in her novels, and then in her few poems. If Mr. Yeats's

verse is steeped in the mists and the magic of Ireland, if Moira O'Neill in *The Glens of Antrim* reflects the Irish simplicity—which is neither sentimental nor insipid, but touched, always, at the heart of it, with irony and pity—Emily Lawless's best poems strike a sombre and powerful note, stirred in her, it would seem, by the grandeur of the Atlantic coast she knew so well, and by long brooding over the history of Ireland. There is passion in it—passion, one might almost think, of vicarious pain—working in one who felt in herself the blood of both peoples, of the oppressor and the oppressed.

The "Wild Geese' [1] was the name given by the romantic and sorrowful imagination of the Irish to those exiled sons of Ireland who, after Limerick and the Boyne, migrated in their thousands over seas, and fought against England in half the armies of the Continent. They avenged Limerick at Fontenoy, and were still—under Napoleon—fighting out the issues of 1689, when the nineteenth century dawned. The cry of Ireland to these cast-out sons of hers is finely given in *After Aughrim* (the battle fought after the taking of Athlone in 1691); and the yearning of the Irish fugitives for their lost country breathes in the beautiful twin-poems "Before the Battle" and "After the Battle"—the first expressing the hunger of the Irishman for battle, for revenge, and the native land he will never see again; and the second, a vision of the triumphant dead coming home at last to "the stony hills of Clare."

But the noblest poem of them all is the *Dirge of the Munster Forest.* The forests of Ireland had sheltered the Irish forces of the Desmonds in the ghastly war of 1581; and in the devastation that followed on their defeat, the forests were not forgotten by the victors. They had given shelter to the rebels, and like them they were ruthlessly slain. The invitation of the Forest to her own funeral feast is vividly and masterly felt. There are some Elizabethan echoes in it, as befits its supposed date. But as a whole, it has the true "inevitable" ring; it could not have been said otherwise; and it ought to keep eternally green the memory of a brave and gifted woman. She died in 1913, after a long and wearing illness, in which, almost to the end, scarcely any of her friends guessed what she had suffered, so high was her Irish courage, and so indomitable her Irish wit and her warm Irish heart.

MARY A. WARD.

[1] See Stopford Brooke's historical Preface to the Poems.

After Aughrim

She said, "They gave me of their best,
They lived, they gave their lives for me;
I tossed them to the howling waste,
And flung them to the foaming sea."

She said, "I never gave them aught,
Not mine the power, if mine the will;
I let them starve, I let them bleed,—
They bled and starved, and loved me still."

She said, "Ten times they fought for me,
Ten times they strove with might and main,
Ten times I saw them beaten down,
Ten times they rose, and fought again."

She said, "I stayed alone at home,
A dreary woman, grey and cold;
I never asked them how they fared,
Yet still they loved me as of old."

She said, "I never called them sons,
I almost ceased to breathe their name,
Then caught it echoing down the wind,
Blown backwards from the lips of Fame."

She said, "Not mine, not mine that fame;
Far over sea, far over land,
Cast forth like rubbish from my shores,
They won it yonder, sword in hand."

She said, "God knows they owe me nought,
I tossed them to the foaming sea,
I tossed them to the howling waste,
Yet still their love comes home to me."

Dirge of the Munster Forest, 1581

Bring out the hemlock! bring the funeral yew!
The faithful ivy that doth all enfold;
Heap high the rocks, the patient brown earth strew,
And cover them against the numbing cold.
Marshal my retinue of bird and beast,
Wren, titmouse, robin, birds of every hue;
Let none keep back, no, not the very least,
Nor fox, nor deer, nor tiny nibbling crew,
Only bid one of all my forest clan
Keep far from us on this our funeral day.
On the grey wolf I lay my sovereign ban,
The great grey wolf who scrapes the earth away;
Lest, with hooked claw and furious hunger, he
Lay bare my dead for gloating foes to see—
Lay bare my dead, who died, and died for me.

For I must shortly die as they have died,
And lo! my doom stands yoked and linked with theirs;
The axe is sharpened to cut down my pride:
I pass, I die, and leave no natural heirs.
Soon shall my sylvan coronals be cast;
My hidden sanctuaries, my secret ways,
Naked must stand to the rebellious blast;
No Spring shall quicken what this Autumn slays.
Therefore, while still I keep my russet crown,
I summon all my lieges to the feast.
Hither, ye flutterers! black, or pied, or brown;
Hither, ye furred ones! Hither every beast!
Only to one of all my forest clan
I cry, "Avaunt! Our mourning revels flee!"
On the grey wolf I lay my sovereign ban,
The great grey wolf with scraping claws, lest he
Lay bare my dead for gloating foes to see—
Lay bare my dead, who died, and died for me.

Fontenoy, 1745

I.—*Before the Battle; night*

Oh bad the march, the weary march, beneath these alien skies,
But good the night, the friendly night, that soothes our tired eyes.
And bad the war, the tedious war, that keeps us sweltering here,
But good the hour, the friendly hour, that brings the battle near.
That brings us on the battle, that summons to their share
The homeless troops, the banished men, the exiled sons of Clare.

Oh little Corca Bascinn, the wild, the bleak, the fair!
Oh little stony pastures, whose flowers are sweet, if rare!
Oh rough and rude Atlantic, the thunderous, the wide,
Whose kiss is like a soldier's kiss which will not be denied!
The whole night long we dream of you, and waking think we're there,—
Vain dream, and foolish waking, we never shall see Clare.

The wind is wild to-night, there's battle in the air;
The wind is from the west, and it seems to blow from Clare.
Have you nothing, nothing for us, loud brawler of the night?
No news to warm our hearts-strings, to speed us through the fight?
In this hollow, star-pricked darkness, as in the sun's hot glare,
In sun-tide, moon-tide, star-tide, we thirst, we starve for Clare!

Hark! yonder through the darkness one distant rat-tat-tat!
The old foe stirs out there, God bless his soul for that!
The old foe musters strongly, he's coming on at last,
And Clare's Brigade may claim its own wherever blows fall fast.
Send us, ye western breezes, our full, our rightful share,
For Faith, and Fame, and Honour, and the ruined hearths of Clare.

FONTENOY, 1745

II.—*After the Battle; early dawn, Clare coast*

"Mary mother, shield us! Say, what men are ye,
Sweeping past so swiftly on this morning sea?"
"Without sails or rowlocks merrily we glide
Home to Corca Bascinn on the brimming tide."

"Jesus save you, gentry! why are ye so white,
Sitting all so straight and still in this misty light?
"Nothing ails us, brother; joyous souls are we,
Sailing home together, on the morning sea.

"Cousins, friends, and kinsfolk, children of the land,
Here we come together, a merry, rousing band;
Sailing home together from the last great fight,
Home to Clare from Fontenoy, in the morning light.

"Men of Corca Bascinn, men of Clare's Brigade,
Harken, stony hills of Clare, hear the charge we made;
See us come together, singing from the fight,
Home to Corca Bascinn, in the morning light."

FRANCIS THOMPSON

[Born 1859, at Preston, where his father was a homoeopathic doctor. His parents and uncles, one of whom was a professor in the Catholic University, Dublin, were of the Roman Catholic religion, as was the son. Educated at Ushaw; at first intended for the priesthood, but afterwards studied medicine at Owens College, with no success. Unfortunately, having read De Quincey's *Confessions*, he took to opium; went to London 1885, and fell into the depths of poverty, but was discovered and rescued by Mr. and Mrs. Meynell, under whose protection he partly broke the evil habit, so that in 1893 he was able to issue his first volume of *Poems*, which ran through five editions in two years. Published *Sister Songs* 1895, and *New Poems* 1897, the last chiefly written in Wales, near the Franciscan Convent; and, later, various essays, reviews, and Catholic biographies. Died in London, of consumption, November 1907.]

Francis Thompson came very near to being a great, a very great, poet; he would pretty certainly have been one had he not clouded his brain and shortened his life by the indulgence referred to above. Never did plausible writing do greater harm than was done to this rare mind by those pages in which De Quincey glorifies opium, saying that whereas "wine robs a man of his self-possession, opium sustains and reinforces it. . . . Opium communicates serenity and equipoise to all the faculties, active or passive. . . . The opium-eater feels that the diviner part of his nature is paramount—that is, the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity, and high over all the great light of the majestic intellect." Young Thompson believed all this, with the result that we know. But when, under the joint influence of religion and of more than parental care, he was able to write, his best work reached a standard attained by very few, whether of his own time or earlier. Burne-Jones, if we may refer to an often-quoted passage, declared in 1893 that "since Gabriel's *Blessed Damozel*, no mystical words had so touched him as *The Hound of Heaven*," and judgments not less enthusiastic were passed by Coventry Patmore, Wilfrid Blunt, and—naturally enough—by Thompson's protectors, the

Meynells. About the same time he wrote, and dedicated to the young daughters of his friends, a volume of *Sister Songs;* we quote from it some lines which both illustrate the grateful affection which he felt to the family and give a pathetic picture of the misery from which they had delivered him. In the interval between 1893 and the publication of *New Poems* (1897), his genius, we will not say ripened, but deepened; witness our third extract, which both in its grasp of the central idea and in its quick succession of vivid images comes very near to the great passages in Shakespeare. But there is another side. Thompson either could not or would not realize the beauty of simplicity. He became, to a greater and greater degree, consciously and wilfully abstruse, and many of his later verses are positively unintelligible, while he grew more and more fond of *nêologismes*, new words, old words with new terminations, and, to use a much-ridiculed phrase of his own, "the illuminous and volute redundance" of sounds. In fact, such is his inequality that Mrs. Meynell, the one "authorized" exponent, has found it desirable to publish a volume of *Selections*, though the aggregate of his poems is so small. Still, it is well to remember that one success in poetry outweighs many failures; and two of the three poems from which we quote are successes that no survey of modern English verse can afford to overlook.

EDITOR.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN [1]

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes, I sped;
And shot, precipitated
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after,
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

[1] These selections from Francis Thompson's poems are reprinted by permission of the publishers, John Lane Company.

They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."
I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love Who followéd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside)
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to;
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their changéd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to dawn: Be sudden—to eve: Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover!
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit,
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clanged His chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that, after which I strayed,
In face of man or maid;

But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked me from them by the hair.
"Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
With me" (I said) "your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine you with caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured dais,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."
So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with—made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—
With them joyed and was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;

But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound *I* speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth,
Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed majestic instancy
And past those Noiséd Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet—
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me."

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenceless utterly,
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed
Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,

Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
Ah! must—
Designer infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds:
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity,
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpséd turrets slowly wash again;
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
Be dunged with rotten death?
Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea;
"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!

"Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said)
"And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?

All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come."

Halts by me that footfall;
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

From "Sister Songs," 1895

A kiss? for a child's kiss?
Aye, goddess, even for this.
Once, bright Sylviola! in days not far,
Once—in that nightmare-time which still doth haunt
My dreams, a grim, unbidden visitant—
Forlorn, and faint, and stark,
I had endured through watches of the dark
The abashless inquisition of each star,
Yea, was the outcast mark
Of all those heavenly passers' scrutiny;
Stood bound and helplessly
For Time to shoot his barbéd minutes at me;
Suffered the trampling hoof of every hour
In night's slow-wheeléd car;
Until the tardy dawn dragged me at length
From under the dread wheels; and, bled of strength,
I waited the inevitable last.
Then came there past
A child; like thee, a spring-flower; but a flower
Fallen from the budded coronal of Spring,
And through the city-streets blown withering!—
And of her own scant pittance did she give,
That I might eat and live;

Then fled, a swift and trackless fugitive.
Therefore I kissed in thee
The heart of childhood, so divine for me;
And her, through what sore ways,
And what unchildish days,
Borne from me now, as then, a trackless fugitive.
Therefore I kissed in thee
Her, child! and innocency,
And spring, and all things that have gone from me,
And that shall never be;
All vanished hopes, and all most hopeless bliss,
Came with thee to my kiss.
And ah! so long myself had strayed afar
From child and woman, and the boon earth's green,
And all wherewith life's face is fair beseen;
Journeying its journey bare
Five suns, except of the all-kissing sun
Unkissed of one;
Almost I had forgot
The healing harms,
And whitest witchery, a-lurk in that
Authentic cestus of two girdling arms;
And I remembered not
The subtle sanctities which dart
From childish lips' unvalued precious brush,
Nor how it makes the sudden lilies push
Between the loosening fibres of the heart.
Then, that thy little kiss
Should be to me all this,
Let workaday wisdom blink sage lids thereat;
Which towers a flight three hedgerows high, poor bat!
And straightway charts me out the empyreal air.
Its chart I wing not by, its canon of worth
Scorn not, nor reck though mine should breed it mirth;
And howso thou and I may be disjoint,
Yet still my falcon spirit makes her point
Over the covert where
Thou, sweetest quarry, hast put in from her!

The End of it

(From *New Poems*, 1897)

She did not love to love; but hated him
For making her to love, and so her whim
From passion taught misprision to begin;
And all this sin
Was because love to cast out had no skill
Self, which was regent still.
Her own self-will made void her own self's will.

JOHN DAVIDSON

[JOHN DAVIDSON, born 1857 and educated at Edinburgh University (1876–7), was for some years a schoolmaster. His first publication was *Bruce*, a poetic drama (1886). In 1889 he came to London, where he lived by his pen as journalist and writer of fiction. *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1893, John Lane) first made his reputation as a poet. He was granted a Civil List Pension in 1906. He was found drowned at Penzance in 1909. His output was large. The author of a number of volumes of verse, he was also responsible for many novels and plays.]

To one at least of the definitions of poetry does the work of John Davidson correspond. It is a criticism of life, a series of essays in human values. What, he asks, is the real worth of this mode of thought, of this course of action? How far are the world's accepted standards absolutely valid? These are the questions he puts and answers, sometimes in philosophical narratives, sometimes in more directly discursive dialogues and soliloquies. The greater part of Davidson's work is frankly didactic. He is without that disinterested passion for pure psychology which led Browning to expound so many contradictory philosophies of life, simply because the mind of men had conceived them and that all mental activity, as such, deserves consideration. Davidson is a moralist, not a psychologist. He always sets out to prove something, and each poem is an argument in support of his general philosophy.

> "It has been said: Ye must be born again.
> I say to you: Men must be that they are."

In these lines Davidson has given expression to the fundamental article of his creed. His poems are the elaboration of this theme. There is no one infallible prescription which a man must follow in order to lead a good life. Salvation is to be found in the untrammelled development of personality; there are as many roads to it as there are individuals seeking it. The traditional prejudices of thought, the conditions of modern life, at once artificial and sordid, are fetters which cramp human growth, which, worn long enough, will dwarf and distort the spirit of man. We must away with these, says Davidson. Men must be free to work out their own salvation unhindered by an artificial complication of circumstances.

Davidson's philosophy is one of strenuous romanticism, combining as it does the creeds of individualistic anarchy and moral earnestness. He rejects some of the most flashy tenets of romanticism—the idea of "genius" as the supreme good, and the notion of a spiritual "escape" out of the material world. He denies the possibility of separating the spiritual from the material, the soul from the body. Men must live in action, reaching good through the purifying ordeal of evil and sorrow. The escape from material active life is an escape from responsibility. Davidson's anarchic individual has a touch of the muscular Christian in him.

We have called Davidson a didactic poet; and if we want to pigeon-hole and classify any farther, we may add that he has the makings of a "nature-poet." His natural descriptions display a very genuine appreciation and are often beautiful, though he is apt to bring nature into his poems in order to enforce the somewhat hackneyed moral, "God made the country and man made the town." His descriptive methods are those of the seventeenth century. He paints nature in those elaborately anthropomorphic conceits so dear to Crashaw and his contemporaries of the "metaphysical" school. Such an image as

> "In chestnut sconces opening wide
> Tapers shall burn some fresh May morn,"

is an example of the suggestive charm of this sort of description when carried out successfully. And Davidson is generally successful, though his conceits lapse sometimes into mere quaintness, as when he speaks of sun and cloud playing a game of blind-man's buff, in the course of which the sun claims

> "Forfeit on forfeit, as he pressed
> The mountains to his burning breast."

This unevenness, this tendency to slip suddenly from beauty to absurdity, is characteristic of Davidson's whole work. Passages of striking originality alternate with flat conventionalities that are poetical only as "poetic diction" is poetical. In his *Ballads*, for instance—those didactic romances enriched with all the ornaments of cultured poetry and as unlike real ballads as well might be—stanzas, of a force and brilliance truly poetical, shine out from dull sing-song passages of rhymed prose. In Davidson's work, together with flatness, the other and opposite fault of overemphasis is frequently to be found. In reading him we are likely

to be troubled with "the sulphurous huff-snuff" of a good deal of high-astounding fustian.

But in studying uneven work, it is the business of the appreciative reader to look not at the depressions, but at the poetical elevations. Davidson possesses the Art of Rising as well as the Art of Sinking. The merits which, at the crest of his achievement, he displays are among the cardinal poetic virtues. The terse expression of concentrated thought, imaginative boldness, beauty as well of imagery as of diction—these are qualities of Davidson's poetry at its best. Add to this his earnest moral purpose, and even the critic who still retains the conception of poetry as a "sugared pill" of doctrine made palatable by fancy, will subscribe to the judgment which allows Davidson a place among the poets.

ALDOUS HUXLEY.

PIPER, PLAY [1]

Now the furnaces are out,
  And the aching anvils sleep;
Down the road the grimy rout
  Tramples homeward twenty deep.
    Piper, play! Piper, play!
      Though we be o'erlaboured men
  Ripe for rest, pipe your best!
      Let us foot it once again.

Bridled looms delay their din;
  All the humming wheels are spent;
Busy spindles cease to spin;
  Warp and woof must rest content.
    Piper, play! Piper, play!
      For a little we are free!
    Foot it, girls, and shake your curls,
      Haggard creatures though we be!

Racked and soiled, the faded air
  Freshens in our holiday;
Clouds and tides our respite share;
  Breezes linger by the way.

[1] "Piper, Play" and "A Ballad of Heaven" are reprinted by permission of Mr. Davidson's publishers, John Lane Company. They are copyrighted 1904, by John Lane.

Piper, rest! Piper, rest!
Now, a carol of the moon!
Piper, piper, play your best!
Melt the sun into your tune!

We are of the humblest grade;
Yet we dare to dance our fill:
Male and female were we made—
Fathers, mothers, lovers still!
Piper—softly; soft and low;
Pipe of love in mellow notes,
Till the tears begin to flow,
Till our hearts are in our throats.

Nameless as the stars of night
Far in galaxies unfurled,
Yet we wield unrivalled might,
Joints and hinges of the world!
Night and day! Night and day!
Sound the song the hours rehearse!
Work and play! Work and play!
The order of the universe!

Now the furnaces are out,
And the aching anvils sleep;
Down the road a merry rout
Dances homeward twenty deep.
Piper, play! Piper, play!
Wearied people though we be,
Ripe for rest, pipe your best!
For a little we are free!

A Ballad of Heaven

He wrought at one great work for years;
The world passed by with lofty look:
Sometimes his eyes were dashed with tears;
Sometimes his lips with laughter shook.

His wife and child went clothed in rags,
And in a windy garret starved;
He trod his measures on the flags,
And high in heaven his music carved.

Wistful he grew, but never feared;
For always on the midnight skies
His rich orchestral score appeared
In stars and zones and galaxies.

He thought to copy down his score;
The moonlight was his lamp; he said,
"Listen, my love;" but on the floor
His wife and child were lying dead.

Her hollow eyes were open wide;
He deemed she heard with special zest:
Her death's-head infant coldly eyed
The desert of her shrunken breast.

"Listen, my love: my work is done;
I tremble as I touch the page
To sign the sentence of the sun,
And crown the great eternal age.

"The slow *adagio* begins;
The winding-sheets are ravelled out
That swathe the minds of men, the sins
That wrap their rotting souls about.

"The dead are heralded along
With silver trumps and golden drums,
And flutes and oboes, keen and strong,
My brave *andante* singing comes.

"Then like a python's sumptuous dress
The frame of things is cast away,
And out of Time's obscure distress,
The thundering *scherzo* crashes Day.

"For three great orchestras I hope
My mighty music shall be scored:
On three high hills they shall have scope
With heaven's vault for a sounding-board.

"Sleep well, love; let your eyelids fall;
Cover the child; good-night, and f . . .
What? Speak . . . the traitorous end of all!
Both . . . cold and hungry . . . cold and stiff!

"But no, God means us well, I trust.
Dear ones, be happy, hope is nigh:
We are too young to fall to dust,
And too unsatisfied to die."

He lifted up against his breast
The woman's body, stark and wan;
And to her withered bosom pressed
The little skin-clad skeleton.

"You see you are alive," he cried.
He rocked them gently to and fro.
"No, no, my love, you have not died,
Nor you, my little fellow; no."

Long in his arms he strained his dead,
And crooned an antique lullaby;
Then laid them on the lowly bed,
And broke down with a doleful cry.

"The love, the hope, the blood, the brain,
Of her and me, the budding life,
And my great music—all in vain!
My unscored work, my child, my wife!

"We drop into oblivion,
And nourish some suburban sod:
My work, this woman, this my son
Are now no more: there is no God.

"The world's a dustbin; we are due,
And death's cart waits: be life accurst!"
He stumbled down besides the two,
And clasping them, his great heart burst.

Straightway he stood at heaven's gate,
  Abashed and trembling for his sin:
I trow he had not long to wait,
  For God came out and led him in.

And then there ran a radiant pair,
  Ruddy with haste and eager-eyed,
To meet him first upon the stair—
  His wife and child beatified.

They clad him in a robe of light,
  And gave him heavenly food to eat;
Great seraphs praised him to the height,
  Archangels sat about his feet.

God, smiling, took him by the hand,
  And led him to the brink of heaven:
He saw where systems whirling stand,
  Where galaxies like snow are driven.

Dead silence reigned; a shudder ran
  Through space; Time furled his wearied wings;
A slow *adagio* then began,
  Sweetly resolving troubled things.

The dead were heralded along:
  As if with drums and trumps of flame,
And flutes and oboes keen and strong,
  A brave *andante* singing came.

Then like a python's sumptuous dress,
  The frame of things was cast away,
And out of Time's obscure distress
  The conquering *scherzo* thundered Day.

He doubted; but God said, "Even so:
  Nothing is lost that's wrought with tears.
The music that you made below
  Is now the music of the spheres."

CANADIAN POETRY

[By Professor Pelham Edgar, Toronto]

In writing of Canadian poetry one can be more enthusiastic in anticipation than in retrospect. We were slow in making a beginning. Until the eighties of the last century everything with us had been weakly imitative, and Howe, Heavysege, Sangster, and MacLachlan, the poets of the earlier time, are mere names in a meaningless enumeration. The poets of Lampman's generation gave us our real start, and since then we have accumulated a body of verse that is sufficiently distinguished to merit attention beyond the limits of our local boundaries.

It is mistaken kindness to expect of the transatlantic poet something naïvely crude and aboriginal. In any event our poets have never responded to any tacit invitation to eccentricity, and we can point to no abnormal developments born of the desire to be at all costs and hazards Canadian. In French Canada, indeed, since the passing of that eminently national poet Fréchette, the tendency has been quite in the other direction, and in the interesting work of Nelligan and Jean Morin the divorce from local influence is absolute. Our English Canadian poets of the recent time have submitted themselves to a dual control, leaving their minds open alike to the suggestions that flow in from their immediate surroundings and to the impressions inspired by contact with the world's best thought. If the imputation of provinciality still clings to us it is for the reason that we are not even yet in the main current of ideas, and our intellectual life has not yet reached the pitch of intensity that demands artistic utterance. Our early writers suffered the inevitable penalties of isolation, and not knowing where to turn for inspiration they became timid copyists of indifferent models. Their successors, with a surer sense of poetic values, have written in a spirit of free and ideal imitation, and have been wisely content to let their originality take care of itself, knowing instinctively that a distinguishing quality would inevitably communicate itself to their work either from the special conditions of their environment, or, if they were themselves not highly sensitive to local suggestion, at least from the special complexion of their own minds.

Miss Valancy Crawford is the earliest writer of whose work specimens are reproduced in the following selections. When we read her verse we realize how wide is the distance to be traversed from the servile copy to the work which, though it may originate in a fertile hint of method or suggestion of thought in some foreign source, is still the authentic utterance of a single mind. Until Miss Valancy Crawford began to write, this arduous intellectual journey had not been attempted, and were it not for the fact that her worth was so long unsuspected by the public she might fittingly be acclaimed the "Mother of Canadian poetry."

Who the father may be is a question of late much and idly disputed. It is safest to accept the multiple parentage suggested in the first paragraph, which derives our lineage from the middle eighties of the last century. Much fresh, inspired, and inspiring work came then from the Eastern Provinces, where Mr. C. G. D. Roberts and Mr. Bliss Carman were young men together with no thought of a career outside of poetry; from Ottowa, where Lampman and Mr. D. C. Scott had formed one of those friendships which sweeten the records of literature; and from Toronto, where Mr. Wilfred Campbell, a more solitary figure, had began to produce his lyrics descriptive of the Great Lake region. A score of names might be added to make the tale of our Canadian poetry complete; but these men pointed the way, and their significance as orginators, no less than the inherent merits of their work, will ensure them a perpetuity at least of local fame.

Viewing their poetry attentively one is impressed by the fact that they are not novices in the art of verse. They have perfected themselves in so far as their genius permitted by a deliberate study of the masters of the craft, and it is a sufficiently simple thing to note, especially in their early work, reflections of the manner, and sometimes of the thought, of Keats, Arnold, Tennyson, Poe, Swinburne, or Browning. Their verse, then, is civilized enough, and, to a European reader curious of novelties and solicitous of the "barbaric yawp" of young democracy, it may seem at first unduly tentative and tame. But it will soon be evident to such a reader that their work is something more than a mere imitative exercise. Each of these men has his own characteristic and individual note, and into the work of all enters the breath of the wind-washed spaces of our new continent.

Mr. Carman and Mr. Roberts have for many years past ceased to live in Canada, yet their influence notably persists in the work

of many of our younger writers. They have founded no school of poetry, yet it counts much for inspiration that they have established a standard of artistic excellence in a new land. Each has his special votaries among us, but many of us seem to find an ampler development of power in the work of Mr. D. C. Scott, whose poetry by an unusual process of growth has increasing freshness and vitality as the years go by. Mr. William Archer once noted the "magically luminous phrases" in which his verse abounds. These felicities he has never lost, and he gives us now a poetry in which emotion and thought, the sensation and the idea, are glowly fused. He would be an interesting poet in any country.

ISABELLA VALANCY CRAWFORD

[BORN in Dublin, 1850; died at Toronto, 1887. She came to Canada as a child. She published one volume: *Old Spookses' Pass, Malcolm's Katie, and Other Poems*. Her collected poems appeared in 1905, edited by Mr. J. W. Garvin, and with an introduction by Miss Ethelwyn Wetherald.]

Isabella Valancy Crawford used to print her verses in the corners of a Toronto evening paper, and she gathered them into a volume shortly before she died. Her talent might have asserted itself more victoriously with altered conditions, but under circumstances apparently the most adverse it refused to acknowledge defeat. She was poor, she was isolated from intellectual friendships, she was without recognition, and almost, one may say, without a country—for she left Ireland too young to have her memories rooted there, and had grown up in a land that had but feebly as yet developed its sense of nationhood. The only patriotic theme that inspired her was the Riel rebellion with its three dead heroes.

We can discover models, or at least sources of inspiration, for her younger contemporaries, for Mr. Roberts, Mr. Carman, and Archibald Lampman, but in Miss Crawford's case it is not possible to name either her masters on her disciples in the craft of verse. The certain strokes of her art proclaim her of the great tradition, yet she is not the slave of any particular style. She is not a picker up of discarded phrases nor a renovator of outworn themes. Her

charm is peculiarly her own, and had her opportunities for literary intercourse been greater her originality, the most precious of her gifts, might conceivably have been less. One is sensible throughout her work of the springing vigour of her poetic fancy, and of the unfailing wealth of her imagery, which is "fresh and has the dew upon it." Miss Wetherald, whose introduction to the *Collected Poems* deserves to be read, speaks of her power of striking out in direct and forcible phrases "the athletic imagery that crowded her brain," and nothing indeed is more remarkable than the energetic way in which she conceives and executes her themes. What has been said of her may seem excessive praise, but if one accepts these superlatives as bearing upon the work of an avowedly minor poet they may be condoned. One last thing to note in a young poetry so preponderatingly descriptive as ours is Valancy Crawford's entire freedom from pedantry. She strikes no bargain with nature, but she looks outwards with unspoiled eyes and combines all her century's passion for beauty with the simplicity of a less sophisticated time.

La Blanchisseuse

Margaton at early dawn
  Thro' the vineyard takes her way,
With her basket piled with lawn
  And with kerchiefs red and gay,
To the stream which babbles past
  Grove, château, and clanking mill.
As it runs it chatters fast
  Like a woman with a will:
    "Blanchisseuse, Blanchisseuse,
      Here I come from Picardy!
    Hurry off thy wooden shoes,
      I will wash thy clothes with thee!"

Margaton's a shapely maid;
  Laughter haunts her large, soft eye;
When she trips by vineyard shade
  Trips the sun with her, say I.
Wooden shoes she lays aside,
  Puts her linen in the rill;

And the stream, in gossip's pride,
Chatters to her with a will:
"Blanchisseuse, Blanchisseuse,
I—I know a thing or two!
Thus, this is the latest news,
Some one dreams of eyes of blue!"

Margaton her linen wrings,
White between her ruddy hands;
O'er her feet the rillet sings,
Dimpling all its golden sands;
Hawthorn blushes touch her hair,
Birdlings twitter sweet and shrill,
Sunbeams seek her everywhere;
Gossips on the wordy rill:
"Blanchisseuse, Blanchisseuse,
He who dreams has lands and flocks!
Margaton may idly choose
Pebbles in the place of rocks!"

Margaton her linen treads,
Ankle-dimple deep her feet;
Nod the stately green fern-heads,
Nod the violets damp and sweet;
Dewy places in the wood
With the ruddy morning fill;
Silenter the downy brood,
Chatters on the gossip rill:
"Blanchisseuse, Blanchisseuse,
He who dreams is rich and great!
Margaton may idly choose
Golden sorrow for a mate!"

Margaton her linen wrings;
Day's gold goblet overflows;
Leaves are stirred with glancing wings;
One can smell the distant rose.
"Silly stream, the Curé said
Just such warning yesterday!"

Rippling o'er its pebbly bed,
Still the stream would have its say:
"Blanchisseuse, Blanchisseuse,
Yet another tale I know,
Some one dreams of, runs my news,
Golden heart in bosom's snow!"

Margaton her linen spreads
On the violet bank to dry;
Droop the willows low their heads,
Curious, for her low reply:
"Dearest stream, but yesternight
Whispered Jean those words to me!"
And the rillet in its flight
Buzzed and murmured like a bee:
"Blanchisseuse, Blanchisseuse,
He who dreams is good and true!
How can Margaton refuse?
Blanchisseuse, adieu, adieu!"

Said the Daisy

There ne'er was blown out of the yellow east
So fresh, so fair, so sweet a morn as this.
The dear earth decked herself as for a feast;
And, as for me, I trembled with my bliss.
The young grass round me was so rich with dew,
And sang me such sweet, tender strains, as low
The breath of dawn among its tall spikes blew;
But what it sang none but myself can know!

O never came so glad a morn before!
So rosy dimpling burst the infant light,
So crystal pure the air the meadows o'er,
The lark with such young rapture took his flight,
The round world seemed not older by an hour
Than mine own daisy self! I laughed to see
How, when her first red roses paled and died,
The blue sky smiled, and decked her azure lea
With daisy clouds, white, pink-fringed, just like me!

"This is a morn for song," sang out the lark,
"O silver-tressed beloved!" My golden eye
Watched his brown wing blot out the last star-spark
Amidst the daisy cloudlets of the sky.
"No morn so sweet as this, so pure, so fair—
God's bud time," so the oldest whitethorn said,
And she has lived so long; yet here and there
Such fresh white buds begem her ancient head.

And from her thorny bosom all last night
Deep in my dew-sealed sleep I heard a note—
So sweet a voice of anguish and delight
I dreamed a red star had a bird-like throat
And that its rays were music which had crept
'Mid the white scented blossoms of the thorn,
And that to hear her sing the still night wept
With mists and dew until the yellow morn.

I wonder, wonder what the song he sang,
That seemed to drown in melody the vales!
I knew my lark's song as he skyward sprang,
But only roses know the nightingale's.
The yellow cowslip bent her honeyed lips
And whispered: "Daisy, wert thou but as high
As I am, thou couldst see the merry ships
On yon blue wondrous field blown gaily by."

A gay, small wind, arch as a ruddy fox,
Crept round my slender, green and dainty stem,
And piped: "Let me but shake thy silver locks
And free thy bent head from its diadem
Of diamond dew, and thou shalt rise and gaze,
Like the tall cowslips, o'er the rustling grass,
On proud, high cliffs, bright strands and sparkling bays,
And watch the white ships as they gaily pass."

"Oh, while thou mayst keep thou thy crystal dew!"
Said the aged thorn, where sang the heart of night,
The nightingale: "The sea is very blue,
The sails of ships are wondrous swift and white.

Soon, soon enough thy dew will sparkling die,
And thou, with burning brow and thirsty lips,
Wilt turn the golden circle of thine eye,
Nor joy in them, on ocean and her ships!"

There never flew across the violet hills
A morn so like a dove with jewelled eyes,
With soft wings fluttering like the sound of rills,
And gentle breast of rose and azure dyes.
The purple trumpets of the clover sent
Such rich, dew-loosened perfume, and the bee
Hung like a gold drop in the woodbine's tent.
What care I for the gay ships and the sea!

The Rose

The Rose was given to man for this:
He, sudden seeing it in later years,
Should swift remember Love's first lingering kiss
And Grief's last lingering tears;

Or, being blind, should feel its yearning soul
Knit all its piercing perfume round his own,
Till he should see on Memory's ample scroll
All roses he had known;

Or, being hard, perchance his finger-tips
Careless might touch the satin of its cup,
And he should feel a dead babe's budding lips
To his lips lifted up;

Or, being deaf and smitten with its star,
Should, on a sudden, almost hear a lark
Rush singing up—the nightingale afar
Sing thro' the dew-bright dark;

Or, sorrow-lost in paths that round and round
Circle old graves, its keen and vital breath
Should call to him within the yew's bleak bound
Of Life, and not of Death.

O Love

O Love builds on the azure sea,
And Love builds on the golden sand,
And Love builds on the rose-winged cloud,
And sometimes Love builds on the land!

O if Love build on sparkling sea,
And if Love build on golden strand,
And if Love build on rosy cloud,
To Love these are the solid land!

O Love will build his lily walls,
And Love his pearly roof will rear
On cloud, or land, or mist, or sea—
Love's solid land is everywhere!

WILLIAM HENRY DRUMMOND

[Born 1854, at Currawn, Co. Leitrim, Ireland; died in Canada, 1907. He came as a boy to Canada, where he subsequently practised medicine and engaged in mining. Three volumes of verse appeared in his lifetime: *The Habitant*, *Johnny Courteau*, and *The Voyageur;* and posthumously *The Great Fight*, with a memoir by his wife.]

The demand is frequently made upon our poets to write verse that is distinctively Canadian, and Drummond in his clever dialect poetry has satisfied that demand more nearly than any of our writers save a still living singer of our Klondike civilization. It is a poetry that when well executed obtains and deserves its popularity, but when one has praised the skill in rhyming and the poet's power to fix a definite type of character, the work of criticism is complete. Genre poetry by its nature is sectional rather than national. The merit of Drummond's performance is that with much humour and sympathetic insight he has portrayed a section of our Canadian people that is both imposing as to numbers and has had time to develop well-marked characteristics. Our Eng-

lish-speaking Canadian (one makes exception of the Irish, Scotch, or English emigrant) eludes the analysis of poetry, and will prove for many years to come a baffling problem for the novelist. But the French-Canadian *habitant* has his aptitudes and his limitations, his prejudices and his passions, laid bare to the eye of the skilled observer. Yet so convincing is the picture that Drummond gives us that we run the risk of under-estimating the genius that contrived it.

For the proper appreciation of his poems we must imagine a *habitant* telling his story in the best language he can command to a sympathetic English listener.

The Wreck of the "Julie Plante"

A Legend of Lac St. Pierre

On wan dark night on Lac St. Pierre,
De win' she blow, blow, blow,
An' de crew of the wood scow *Julie Plante*
Got scar't an' run below—
For de win' she blow lak hurricane,
Bimeby she blow some more,
An' de scow bus' up on Lac St. Pierre
Wan arpent from de shore.

De captinne walk on de fronte deck,
An' walk de hin' deck too—
He call de crew from up de hole,
He call de cook also.
De cook she's name was Rosie,
She come from Montreal,
Was chambre maid on lumber barge,
On de Grande Lachine Canal.

De win' she blow from nor'—eas'—wes'—
De sout' win' she blow too,
W'en Rosie cry "Mon cher captinne,
Mon cher, w'at I shall do?"

Den de captinne t'row de big ankerre
But still de scow she dreef,
De crew he can't pass on de shore,
Becos' he los' hees skeef.

De night was dark lak' wan black cat,
De wave run high an' fas',
W'en de captinne tak' de Rosie girl
An' tie her to de mas'.
Den he also tak' de life preserve,
An' jump off on de lak'.
An' say, "Good-bye, ma Rosie dear,
I go drown for your sak'."

Nex' morning very early,
'Bout ha'f-pas' two—t'ree—four—
De captinne—scow—an' de poor Rosie
Was corpses on de shore,
For the win' she blow lak' hurricane
Bimeby she blow some more,
An' de scow bus' up on Lac St. Pierre
Wan arpent from de shore.

Moral

Now all good wood scow sailor man
Tak' warning by dat storm
An' go an' marry some nice French girl
An' leev on wan beeg farm.
De win' can blow lak' hurricane,
An' spose she blow some more,
You can't get drown on Lac St. Pierre
So long you stay on shore.

Johnnie's First Moose

De cloud is hide de moon, but dere's plaintee light above,
Steady, Johnnie, steady—kip your head down low,
Move de paddle leetle quicker, an' de ole canoe we'll shove
T'roo de water nice an' quiet
For de place we're goin' try it
Is beyon' de silver birch dere,
You can see it lak a church dere
W'en we're passin' on de corner w'ere de lily flower grow.

Wasn't dat correc' w'at I'm tolin' you jus' now?
Steady, Johnnie, steady—kip your head down low,
Never min', I'll watch behin'—me—an' you can watch de bow,
An' you'll see a leetle clearer
W'en canoe is comin' nearer—
Dere she is—now easy, easy,
For de win' is gettin' breezy,
An' we don't want not'ing smell us, till de horn begin to blow.

I remember long ago w'en ma fader tak' me out,
Steady, Johnnie, steady—kip your head down low,
Jus' de way I'm takin' you, sir, hello! was dat a shout?
Seems to me I t'ink I'm hearin'
Somet'ing stirrin' on de clearin'
W'ere it stan' de lumber shaintee;
If it's true, den you'll have plaintee
Work to do in half a minute, if de moose don't start to go.

An' now we're on de shore, let us hide de ole canoe,
Steady, Johnnie, steady—kip your head down low,
An' lie among de rushes, dat's bes' t'ing we can do,
For de ole boy may be closer
Dan anybody know, sir,
An' look out you don't be shakin'
Or de bad shot you'll be makin';
But I'm feelin' sam' way too, me, w'en I was young, also.

You ready for de call? here goes for number wan,
Steady, Johnnie, steady—kip your head down low,
Did you hear how nice I do it, an' how it travel on

Till it reach across de reever
Dat'll geev' some moose de fever!
Wait now, Johnnie, don't you worry,
No use bein' on de hurry,
But lissen for de answer, it'll come before you know.

For w'y you jomp lak dat? w'at's matter wit' your ear?
Steady, Johnnie, steady—kip your head down low—
Tak' your finger off de trigger, dat was only bird you hear.
Can't you tell de pine tree crickin'
Or de boule frog w'en he's spikin'?
Don't you know de grey owl singin'
From de beeg moose w'en he's ringin'
Out hees challenge on de message your ole gran'fader blow?

You're lucky boy to-night, wit' hunter man lak me!
Steady, Johnnie, steady—kip your head down low—
Can tole you all about it! H-s-s-h! dat's somet'ing now I see,
Dere he's comin' t'roo de bushes,
So get down among de rushes,
Hear heem walk! I t'ink, by tonder,
He mus' go near fourteen honder.
Dat's de feller I been watchin' all de evening, I dunno.

I'll geev' anoder call, jus' a leetle wan or two,
Steady, Johnnie, steady—kip your head down low—
W'en he see dere's no wan waitin' I wonder w'at he'll do?
But look out for here he's comin';
Sa-pris-ti! ma heart is drummin'!
You can never get heem nearer
An' de moon is shinin' clearer,
W'at a fine shot you'll be havin'! now, Johnnie, let her go!

Bang! bang! you got heem sure! an' he'll never run away
Nor feed among de lily on de shore of Wessonneau.
So dat's your first moose, Johnnie! wall! remember all I say—
Doesn't matter w'at you're chasin',
Doesn't matter w'at you're facin',
Only watch de t'ing you're doin';
If you don't, ba gosh! you're ruin!
An' steady, Johnnie, steady—kip your head down low.

Dreams

Bord à Plouffe, Bord à Plouffe,
W'at do I see w'en I dream of you?
A shore w'ere de water is racin' by,
A small boy lookin', an' wonderin' w'y
He can't get fedder for goin' fly
Lak de hawk makin' ring on de summer sky
Dat's w'at I see.

Bord à Plouffe, Bord à Plouffe,
W'at do I hear w'en I dream of you?
Too many t'ing for sleepin' well!
De song of de ole tam cariole bell,
De voice of dat girl from Sainte Angèle,
(I geev' her a ring was mark "fidèle")
Dat's w'at I hear.

Bord à Plouffe, Bord à Plouffe,
W'at do I smoke w'en I dream of you?
Havana cigar from across de sea,
An' get dem for not'ing too? No, siree!
Dere's only wan kin' of tabac for me,
An' it grow on de Rivière des Prairies—
Dat's w'at I smoke.

Bord à Plouffe, Bord à Plouffe,
How do I feel w'en I t'ink of you?
Sick, sick for de ole place way back dere—
An' to sleep on ma own leetle room upstair
W'ere de ghos' on de chimley mak' me scare,
I'd geev more monee dan I can spare—
Dat's how I feel.

Bord à Plouffe, Bord à Plouffe,
W'at will I do w'en I'm back wit' you?
I'll buy de farm of Bonhomme Martel,
Long tam he's been waitin' a chance to sell,
Den pass de nex' morning on Sainte Angèle,
An' if she's not marry—dat girl—very well,
Dat's w'at I'll do.

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN

[Born at Morpeth, Canada, 1861; died at Ottawa, 1899. He became a clerk in the Civil Service. He published two volumes of verse, *Among the Millet* and *Lyrics of Earth*, and was preparing a third volume, *Alcyone*, for the press at the time of his death. His collected poems were published in 1900 with a memoir by Mr. Duncan Campbell Scott.]

A new manner and a new temper of thought came into Canadian literature shortly after 1880, and Mr. Roberts and Mr. Carman, Mr. Wilfred Campbell, Mr. D. C. Scott, and Archibald Lampman, are the poetic voices of our renaissance. Each was soon to develop his own peculiar vein, but they all shared a kindred enthusiasm for nature, Mr. Roberts and Mr. Carman reproducing the atmosphere of the Eastern sea-board, Mr. Campbell writing vigorous lyrics of the Great Lakes region, and Mr. Scott and Lampman taking as their province the beautiful country that lies about Ottawa, where cultivation merges so rapidly into the untamed beauty of the Laurentian hills that bound the near horizon.

Of this group Lampman has subordinated himself most completely to the influences which flow from nature, and he takes rank as the finest of our descriptive poets. He cannot be said to have any systematic philosophy of nature, unless it be that to yield oneself completely to her sway is to master the secret of unselfish and noble living. It is not exciting poetry, and it is probable that the more dramatic methods and the more fluid technique of our present-day writers have made us careless of his quieter perfection. But Lampman's work has solid virtues that will keep it alive long after the collapse of many an ultra-modernist reputation, and among Canadian poets at least he will remain a classic.

Heat

From plains that reel to southward, dim,
  The road runs by me white and bare;
Up the steep hill it seems to swim
  Beyond, and melt into the glare.

Upward half-way, or it may be
  Nearer the summit, slowly steals
A hay-cart, moving dustily
  With idly clacking wheels.

By his cart's side the wagoner
  Is slouching slowly at his ease,
Half-hidden in the windless blur
  Of white dust puffing to his knees.
This waggon on the height above,
  From sky to sky on either hand,
Is the sole thing that seems to move
  In all the heat-held land.

Beyond me in the fields the sun
  Soaks in the grass and hath his will;
I count the marguerites one by one;
  Even the buttercups are still.
On the brook yonder not a breath
  Disturbs the spider or the midge.
The water-bugs draw close beneath
  The cool gloom of the bridge.

Where the far elm-tree shadows flood
  Dark patches in the burning grass,
The cows, each with her peaceful cud,
  Lie waiting for the heat to pass.
From somewhere on the slope near by
  Into the pale depth of the noon
A wandering thrush slides leisurely
  His thin revolving tune.

In intervals of dreams I hear
  The cricket from the droughty ground;
The grasshoppers spin into mine ear
  A small innumerable sound.
I lift mine eyes sometimes to gaze:
  The burning sky-line blinds my sight:
The woods far off are blue with haze:
  The hills are drenched in light.

And yet to me not this or that
Is always sharp or always sweet;
In the sloped shadow of my hat
I lean at rest, and drain the heat;
Nay more, I think some blessèd power
Hath brought me wandering idly here:
In the full furnace of this hour
My thoughts grow keen and clear.

Outlook

Not to be conquered by these headlong days,
But to stand free: to keep the mind at brood
On life's deep meaning, nature's altitude
Of loveliness, and time's mysterious ways;
At every thought and deed to clear the haze
Out of our eyes, considering only this,
What man, what life, what love, what beauty is,
This is to live, and win the final praise.
Though strife, ill fortune, and harsh human need
Beat down the soul, at moments blind and dumb
With agony; yet, patience—there shall come
Many great voices from life's outer sea,
Hours of strange triumph, and, when few men heed,
Murmurs and glimpses of eternity.

The Woodcutter's Hut

Far up in the wild and wintry hills in the heart of the cliff-broken woods,
Where the mounded drifts lie soft and deep in the noiseless solitudes.
The hut of the lonely woodcutter stands, a few rough beams that show
A blunted peak and a low black line, from the glittering waste of snow.
In the frost-still dawn from his roof goes up in the windless, motionless air,

The thin, pink curl of leisurely smoke; through the forest white and bare
The woodcutter follows his narrow trail, and the morning rings and cracks
With the rhythmic jet of his sharp-blown breath and the echoing shout of his axe.
Only the waft of the wind besides, or the stir of some hardy bird—
The call of the friendly chickadee, or the pat of the nut-hatch—is heard;
Or a rustle comes from a dusky clump, where the busy siskins feed,
And scatter the dimpled sheet of the snow with the shells of the cedar-seed.
Day after day the woodcutter toils untiring with axe and wedge,
Till the jingling teams come up from the road that runs by the valley's edge,
With plunging of horses, and hurling of snow, and many a shouted word,
And carry away the keen-scented fruit of his cutting, cord upon cord.
Not the sound of a living foot comes else, not a moving visitant there,
Save the delicate step of some halting doe, or the sniff of a prowling bear.
And only the stars are above him at night, and the trees that creak and groan,
And the frozen, hard-swept mountain-crests with their silent fronts of stone,
As he watches the sinking glow of his fire and the wavering flames upcaught,
Cleaning his rifle or mending his moccasins, sleepy and slow of thought.
Or when the fierce snow comes, with the rising wind, from the grey north-east,
He lies through the leaguering hours in his bunk like a winter-hidden beast,
Or sits on the hard-packed earth, and smokes by his draught-blown guttering fire,
Without thought or remembrance, hardly awake, and waits for the storm to tire.

Scarcely he hears from the rock-rimmed heights to the wild ravines below,
Near and far off, the limitless wings of tempest hurl and go
In roaring gusts that plunge through the cracking forest, and lull, and lift,
All day without stint and all night long with the sweep of the hissing drift.
But winter shall pass ere long with its hills of snow and its fettered dreams,
And the forest shall glimmer with living gold, and chime with the gushing of streams;
Millions of little points of plants shall prick through its matted floor,
And the wind-flower lift and uncurl her silken buds by the woodman's door;
The sparrow shall see and exult; but lo! as the spring draws gaily on,
The woodcutter's hut is empty and bare, and the master that made it is gone.
He is gone where the gathering of valley men another labour yields,
To handle the plough and the harrow, and scythe, in the heat of the summer fields.
He is gone with his corded arms, and his ruddy face, and his moccasined feet,
The animal man in his warmth and vigour, sound, and hard and complete.
And all summer long, round the lonely hut, the black earth burgeons and breeds,
Till the spaces are filled with the tall-plumed ferns and the triumphing forest-weeds;
The thick wild raspberries hem its walls, and stretching on either hand,
The red-ribbed stems and the giant leaves of the sovereign spikenard stand.
So lonely and silent it is, so withered and warped with the sun and snow,
You would think it the fruit of some dead man's toil a hundred years ago;
And he who finds it suddenly there, as he wanders far and alone,

Is touched with a sweet and beautiful sense of something tender and gone,
The sense of a struggling life in the waste, and the mark of a soul's command,
The going and coming of vanished feet, the touch of a human hand.

TEMAGAMI

Far in the grim North-west beyond the lines
That turn the rivers eastward to the sea,
Set with a thousand islands, crowned with pines,
Lies the deep water, wild Temagami:
Wild for the hunter's roving, and the use
Of trappers in its dark and trackless vales,
Wild with the trampling of the giant moose,
And the weird magic of old Indian tales.
All day with steady paddles toward the west
Our heavy-laden long canoe we pressed:
All day we saw the thunder-travelled sky
Purpled with storm in many a trailing tress,
And saw at eve the broken sunset die
In crimson on the silent wilderness.

WAYAGAMACK

Beautiful are thy hills, Wayagamack,
Thy depths of lonely rock, thine endless piles
Of grim birch forest and thy spruce-dark isles,
Thy waters fathomless and pure and black,
But golden where the gravel meets the sun,
And beautiful thy twilight solitude,
The gloom that gathers over lake and wood
A weirder silence when the day is done.
For ever wild, too savage for the plough,
Thine austere beauty thou canst never lose.
Change shall not mar thy loneliness, nor tide
Of human trespass trouble thy repose,
The Indian's paddle and the hunter's stride
Shall jar thy dream, and break thy peace enow.

HAROLD VERSCHOYLE WRONG

[Born 1891, at Toronto. Killed in action at Thiepval, July 1, 1916]

Death

I felt the clouds and all around me mist;
Behind, the twilight; a great flame, before,
That pierced the thickspun texture of the clouds;
Behind, it cleared, the mist was all before.
I stood upon a pinnacle that rose
High in the air, and yet there was no height,
But all the world lay near within my grasp.
Light was my soul and my feet urged me on,
On through the grey that cloaked the distant flame;
I paused and looked, then forward turned once more,
And forward strode into the foaming cloud.
And as I went the flame grew bright and wide,
And all was brilliant with that blazing light
Which dazzled me and filled my eyes with red,
Till I was blinded and fell fainting down.
Then cleared the clouds and there was no more mist.

The Great Adventure

The travel birds which journey in the spring
  Lust after pleasures of awakened sight;
  They rout the weather in a truceless fight,
And swell their souls with joy of buffeting
And constant strife. To know the unknown thing,
  To see the unseeable in God's despite,
  To try his strength against another's might,
This set Ulysses to his wandering.
And this we still desire, we, who live
  Clamped to the dulness of an ordered round;
'Tis ours to take the best the world can give,
  And if the taking slay us on the way
What loss is that? We too were outward bound
  Beyond the narrow shelter of the bay.

ERNEST DOWSON

[Ernest Christopher Dowson, born August 2, 1867, lived the earlier part of his life abroad. He was educated at Queen's College, Oxford, which he left in 1887 without taking a degree. Thenceforward he lived partly in London, partly in Paris, returning finally to London only to die, February 23, 1900. He did a number of translations from the French, hack-work for which he received a regular pittance, and was part author of two novels. In verse he published *Verses* (1896), *The Pierrot of the Minute* (1897), while *Decorations* appeared posthumously, published by John Lane.]

History affords us only too many examples of the poets whom life and its dirunal miseries have overwhelmed. Out of this pitiful company, some, like Chatterton and de Nerval, found in suicide their only road of escape. Others needed not to go "ridiculement se pendre au réverbère": to these, in its own time, came early death, putting a period to all their wretchedness. Ernest Dowson is numbered among these. For him reality meant poverty and disease. Conquered by life, he was yet in a sense its conqueror; for out of his life's ugliness and pain he created beauty. The cry that his agony extorted from him was an articulate music, always melancholy and pathetic, and possessing sometimes a plaintive loveliness all its own.

His poetry is always essentially lyrical and personal. He generalized no world-philosophy out of his experiences. Because life wearied him he did not, like Byron or Leopardi, postulate a universal ennui, did not rise in titanic curses against the Creator of a world where life was only supportable by illusions. Dowson did not see in his own misfortunes the Promethean symbol of persecuted but indomitable humanity. His poetry is the poetry of resignation, not of rebellion. He suffers, and records the fact. That is enough; he draws no universal conclusions, he does not rail on fate; he is content to suffer and be sad.

Weariness and resignation—these are his themes; weariness of life and a great desire for the "quiet consummation" of death, the annihilator; resignation, helpless and hopeless, to the fate that

persecutes him. This constitutes his stock of poetical material. He sings the same song over and over, a thin, lamenting melody.

With no great desire to achieve originality, he made unashamed use of all the time-honoured poetical paraphernalia—lute and viol, poppy and rose and lily, with all those rare, remote precious things which the poets throughout the ages have appropriated to their peculiar use. He did not trouble himself to seek out a new diction, to invent new moulds of expression in which to cast his thought. The old conventional language of poetry, a language consciously archaic and aloof from the living speech of men, satisfied him completely. In his language he never passes the traditional bounds of nineteenth-century Elizabethanism.

What is it, then, which makes Dowson a poet? We have seen how limited was his stock of ideas, how familiar his images and diction. What is the quality in his work which raises it above flat mediocrity and makes it readable? Wherein does his magic consist? The answer to these questions is surely to be found in that quality of musical beauty which is characteristic of all his work.

Each poet has his musical beauty, each period is distinguished by its own harmony. To wed the musical form with the content of meaning so that the music expresses the thought in the purely sensuous symbols of its harmony—that is the achievement of the true poet. A great poet can tune his music to every mode.

Dowson, with his very limited poetical genius, knew of only one kind of music, the music of sadness. The rhythm of his lines is always slow and passionless. No harshness of abrupt energy breaks their melancholy sweetness, no eagerness quickens the weariness of their march. To heighten the effect of his music he makes frequent use of the refrain. Every reader of poetry knows how absurd or how deeply impressive this serial return to the same point may be. Dowson's use of the device is for the most part happy: "I have been faithful to you, Cynara! in my fashion." "Sufficient for the day are the day's evil things" are haunting lines, whose return, stanza by stanza, produces a cumulative effect upon the mind, like the insistent moan of Dunbar's "Timor Mortis conturbat me." Musical arrangements more elaborate than the simple periodical refrain are often used in Dowson's works. He has written several villanelles, of which one is quoted in this place. Well handled, the form is capable of being of great beauty. "A little, passionately, not at all!"—he evokes

here a drooping, evanescent music, a "dying fall" of poetry. Indeed, all Dowson's poetry possesses this quality of a music wearily drooping towards its close, trembling on the verge of silence. He reproduces the negative emotions of spent passion, the feelings of quiet sadness evoked by a song that draws to an end—a great period of human activity that closes. It is not for us to complain that he did not achieve more, as much as the great poets. Rather, we must be thankful for the contribution of beauty which he has brought to the general treasury—however small that contribution may be.

ALDOUS HUXLEY.

NUNS OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION [1]

Calm, sad, secure; behind high convent walls,
These watch the sacred lamp, these watch and pray:
And it is one with them when evening falls,
And one with them the cold return of day.

These heed not time; their nights and days they make
Into a long returning rosary,
Whereon their lives are threaded for Christ's sake;
Meekness and vigilance and chastity.

A vowed patrol, in silent companies,
Life-long they keep before the living Christ.
In that dim church, their prayers and penances
Are fragrant incense to the Sacrificed.

Outside, the world is wide and passionate;
Man's weary laughter and his sick despair
Entreat at their impenetrable gate;
They heed no voices in their dream of prayer.

They saw the glory of the world displayed;
They saw the bitter of it, and the sweet;
They knew the roses of the world should fade,
And be trod under by the hurrying feet.

[1] These selections from Ernest Dowson's poetry are reprinted by permission of the publishers, John Lane Company.

Therefore they rather put away desire,
And crossed their hands and came to sanctuary,
And veiled their heads and put on coarse attire;
Because their comeliness was vanity.

And there they rest; they have serene insight
Of the illuminating dawn to be;
Mary's sweet Star dispels for them the night,
The proper darkness of humanity.

Calm and secure; with faces worn and mild;
Surely their choice of vigil is the best?
Yea! for our roses fade, the world is wild;
But there, besides the altar, there, is rest.

"Non sum qualis eram bonæ sub regno Cynaræ"

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat,
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep she lay;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
When I awoke and found the dawn was grey:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,
Flung roses, roses, riotously with the throng,
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, all the time, because the dance was long:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

Vain Hope

Sometimes, to solace my sad heart, I say,
Though late it be, though lily-time be past,
Though all the summer skies be overcast,
Haply I will go down to her, some day,
And cast my rests of life before her feet,
That she may have her will of me, being so sweet
And none gainsay!

So might she look on me with pitying eyes,
And lay calm hands of healing on my head;
"Because of thy long pains be comforted;
For I, even I, am Love; sad soul, arise!"
So, for her graciousness, I might at last
Gaze on the very face of Love, and hold him fast
In no disguise.

Haply, I said, she will take pity on me,
Though late I come, long after lily-time,
With burden of waste days and drifted rhyme:
Her kind, calm eyes, down drooping maidenly,
Shall change, grow soft: there is yet time, meseems,
I said, for solace; though I know these things are dreams,
And may not be!

Villanelle of Marguerites

"A little, passionately, not at all?"
She casts the snowy petals on the air;
And what care we how many petals fall?

Nay, wherefore seek the seasons to forestall?
It is but playing, and she will not care,
A little, passionately, not at all!

She would not answer us if we should call
Across the years; her visions are too fair:
And what care we how many petals fall!

She knows us not, nor recks if she enthrall
With voice and eyes and fashion of her hair,
A little, passionately, not at all!

Knee-deep she goes in meadow-grasses tall,
Kissed by the daisies that her fingers tear;
And what care we how many petals fall!

We pass and go; but she shall not recall
What men we were, nor all she made us bear;
"A little, passionately, not at all!"
And what care we how many petals fall!

A Last Word

Let us go hence: the night is now at hand;
The day is overworn, the birds all flown;
And we have reaped the crops the gods have sown;
Despair and death's deep darkness o'er the land
Broods like an owl; we cannot understand
Laughter or tears, for we have only known
Surpassing vanity; vain things alone
Have driven our perverse and aimless band.

Let us go hence, somewhither strange and cold,
To Hollow Lands where just men and unjust
Find end of labour, where's rest for the old,
Freedom to all from love and fear and lust.
Twine our torn hands! O pray the earth enfold
Our life-sick hearts and turn them into dust.

RICHARD MIDDLETON

[Richard Middleton, born 1889, died at Brussels in 1911. His work, during his life, was published in various periodicals. Three volumes of prose, *The Ghost Ship*, *Monologues*, and *The Day before Yesterday*, containing essays and short stories, were collected after his death. Two volumes of verse, *Poems and Songs*, first and second series, were also posthumously published in 1912 and 1913, by Fisher Unwin.]

The mind of a great poet is a mirror endowed with the power of collecting the diffused and broken light of experience and reverberating it in one bright focal ray of consummated expression. Good poetry is always an account of facts, whether facts of the senses, or of thought and passion and imagination. It is not a collection of vague phrases and unbodied verbiage, but a significant expression of truth. But there is also a kind of simulation poetry, which *is* an art of making phrases, of linking shadowy, inaccurate words into a melody. This rhetoric a gradus may teach; and by a man of talent it may be brought to a certain specious perfection, from which only time and the ravages of criticism will rub the dazzle and the gilt. At its best, the poetry of words may drug and intoxicate the senses. It can never hope to appeal to any higher faculty.

The work of Richard Middleton belongs to both these categories. Some of his writing may be classed with true poetry; some, and perhaps it is the greater part, with the sham variety. At his most inspired, he displays clarity of thought and sincere emotion, clothed in melody that is sweet, sometimes to overripeness. At his worst, he trusts to vaguely "poetical" words and a copious use of not too significant images to cover the defects in the substance of his poetry. His bad verse is like a piece of music, blurred into husky sweetness by some indifferent player who relies for his effects rather on the pedal than on a clean and skilful execution. The fine intricacies of truth, which a great poet labours exactly to express, are by Middleton too often confounded and smudged into a rhetorical dimness, where outlines are lost in a welter of sensuous words.

It is not hard to find examples of Middleton's rhetorical vagueness and exuberance. His poems abound in such phrases as

"stained by the wine of our old ecstasy," "moonlit lilies of the past," "domes of desire and secret halls of sin." They are powdered with "the dust of dreams," and on their smooth tide of harmony swims many a "dreamy ship," many an "argosy" freighted with no poetical treasure beyond its own sonorous name. The use of words without significant content, intoxicating substitutes for thought, has been the bane of almost every mental activity. Not least has poetry suffered. Beautiful as, in its way, rhetoric may be, it is nevertheless a degraded form of poetry.

Of the earth and of the fire, earthly and fiery, Middleton's best poems are the expression of a passionate paganism. This present world is enough for us, he says, and a man may satisfy his soul with the good things of it, kisses and wine and sunlight. He bids us pluck the roses of the day, adding no philosophic caution as to the limitation of desires. In passion the extreme is the only mean, and, for him, the ideal life is one of continual passion, of unceasing and ecstatic enjoyment of the here and now. If the spirit has any thirst for the infinite, it must satisfy itself in the boundlessness of passion. He has not the vision of the mystic who looks through the beauties of this world into a divine beauty beyond them. To his eyes the things of the earth are opaque, solid, complete in themselves. They are divine, not as being symbols of some universal spirit, but because of the earth-born divinity within themselves—tutelary nymph or little goat-foot genius of the place. Passion, then, and the warm immediacy of paganism are the themes upon which Middleton works. He gives them expression in a rich voluptuous form, that is apt, as we have seen, to decay to mere verbal luxuriance.

The metrical skill displayed in all the poems is considerable, though the range of the musical effects at which Middleton aims is a narrow one. Smoothness and sweetness of numbers, melodies that will sing themselves as they run—these are the characteristics of Middleton's verse. Many of the metrical devices adapted by the nineteenth century from Elizabethan usage are to be met with in his poems. Such balanced phrases of rhythm as,

> "For I have learnt too many things to live,
> And I have loved too many things to die,"

or as,

> "And there is earth upon my eyes
> And earth upon my singing lips,"

illustrate the successful use of one of the most pleasing of these musical artifices.

ALDOUS HUXLEY.

The Carol of the Poor Children

We are the poor children, come out to see the sights
On this day of all days, on this night of nights;
The stars in merry parties are dancing in the sky,
A fine star, a new star, is shining on high!

We are the poor children, our lips are frosty blue,
We cannot sing our carol as well as rich folk do;
Our bellies are so empty we have no singing voice,
But this night of all nights good children must rejoice.

We do rejoice, we do rejoice, as hard as we can try,
A fine star, a new star is shining in the sky!
And while we sing our carol, we think of the delight
The happy kings and shepherds make in Bethlehem to-night.

Are we naked, mother, and are we starving-poor—
Oh, see what gifts the kings have brought outside the stable door;
Are we cold, mother, the ass will give his hay
To make the manger warm and keep the cruel winds away

We are the poor children, but not so poor who sing
Our carol with our voiceless hearts to greet the new-born King,
On this night of all nights, when in the frosty sky
A new star, a kind star is shining on high!

Any Lover, any Lass

Why are her eyes so bright, so bright,
  Why do her lips control
The kisses of a summer night,
  When I would love her soul?

God set her brave eyes wide apart
  And painted them with fire,
They stir the ashes of my heart
  To embers of desire.

Her lips so tenderly are wrought
  In so divine a shape,
That I am servant to my thought
  And can nowise escape.

Her body is a flower, her hair
About her neck doth play;
I find her colours everywhere,
They are the pride of day.

Her little hands are soft, and when
I see her fingers move
I know in very truth that men
Have died for less than love.

Ah, dear, live, lovely thing! my eyes
Have sought her like a prayer;
It is my better self that cries
"Would she were not so fair!"

Would I might forfeit ecstasy
And find a calmer place,
Where I might undesirous see
Her too desiréd face.

Nor feel her eyes so bright, so bright,
Nor hear her lips unroll
Dream after dream the lifelong night,
When I would love her soul.

Autumnal

Across the scented garden of my dreams
Where roses grew, Time passes like a thief,
Among my trees his silver sickle gleams,
The grass is stained with many a ruddy leaf;
And on cold winds the petals float away
That were the pride of June and her array.

The bare boughs weave a net upon the sky
To catch Love's wings and his fair body bruise;
There are no flowers in the rosary—
No song-birds in the mournful avenues;
Though on the sodden air not lightly breaks
The elegy of Youth, whom love forsakes.

Ah, Time! one flower of all my garden spare,
  One rose of all the roses, that in this
I may possess my love's perfumèd hair
  And all the crimson secrets of her kiss.
Grant me one rose that I may drink its wine,
And from her lips win the last anodyne.

For I have learnt too many things to live,
  And I have loved too many things to die;
But all my barren acres I would give
  For one red blossom of eternity,
To animate the darkness and delight
The spaces and the silences of night.

But dreams are tender flowers that in their birth
  Are very near to death, and I shall reap,
Who planted wonder, unavailing earth,
  Harsh thorns and miserable husks of sleep.
I have had dreams, but have not conquered Time,
And love shall vanish like an empty rhyme.

Pagan Epitaph

Servant of the eternal Must
  I lie here, here let me lie,
In the ashes and the dust,
  Dreaming, dreaming pleasantly.
When I lived I sought no wings,
  Schemed no heaven, planned no hell,
But, content with little things,
  Made an earth, and it was well.

Song and laughter, food and wine,
  Roses, roses red and white,
And a star or two to shine
  On my dewy world at night.
Lord, what more could I desire?
  With my little heart of clay
I have lit no eternal fire
  To burn my dreams on Judgment Day!

Well I loved, but they who knew
  What my laughing heart could be,
What my singing lips could do,
  Lie a-dreaming here with me.

I can feel their finger-tips
  Stroke the darkness from my face,
And the music of their lips
  Fills my pleasant resting-place
In the ashes and the dust,
  Where I wonder as I lie,
Servant of the eternal Must,
  Dreaming, dreaming pleasantly.

MARY COLERIDGE

[Mary Elizabeth Coleridge was born in London, September 23, 1861. Her grandfather was the son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's elder brother James. Her first novel, *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus* (1893), mystified most readers, though it attracted the notice of Stevenson. *The King with Two Faces* (1897) was far more successful. It was followed by a few other novels and a book of essays. Mary Coleridge published no poetry under her own name. Her first book of verse, *Fancy's Following*, "by Anodos," was printed by Mr. Daniel at his private press at Oxford in 1896; and *Fancy's Guerdon*, mostly reprinted from this, was published the next year in Elkin Mathews's *Shilling Garland*. A volume of collected poems was edited after her death by Henry Newbolt. She died in London, unmarried, on August 25, 1907. Her friend Edith Sichel published a collection of her stories and essays in 1910, with a short memoir.]

No one was ever less of a professional poet than Mary Coleridge. She was writing verse for twenty-five years, but the greater part of her poems were never printed in her lifetime, and she refused to publish under her own name. Yet assuredly her place is secure among the lyric poets of England. Perhaps just because they were produced with so little thought of the public, her poems have a fresh directness and intimacy which few lyrists attain so perfectly. They were the spontaneous overflow of her spirit; and that spirit was one of rare gift and charm. The most obviously striking characteristic of Mary Coleridge's nature was the combination of unusual depth with unusual vivacity. She was quick to be moved, but it was not only the surface which was stirred, it was her whole being. She was as gay as she was serious; but the gaiety was not a mere disguise to the seriousness, the imaginative humour from which it sprang was a fundamental part of her nature and gave it the strength of elasticity. The bright effervescence of her intellect did not prevent her from being as enthusiastic as she was warm-hearted. She was not less tender than high-spirited. And though her mind was nothing if not adventurous, at the core of her being was an exquisite humility.

With all this complexity of nature she had a great sincerity. What she wrote in one mood might be contradicted by what she wrote in another; but the reader of her poems feels that each is sincere, that it is even a part of her rich sincerity to give spontaneous utterance to those inconsistencies of thought and feeling which exist in all the most human hearts and minds, though philosophers may believe it a duty to reconcile or gloze them.

Mary Coleridge's poetry was so direct an expression of her nature that it could not fail to be original, in the truest sense of originality. Though her reading was wide, she does not follow any master or tradition. Among English poets there is hardly one to whom she shows any essential affinity, though in evocation of a magic atmosphere she shows herself the kinswoman of the author of *Christabel*. Now and again we may be reminded of Browning at his most lyrical and direct; Mr. Bridges finds in some of her poems a likeness, both of matter and manner, to Blake; and it is certainly remarkable in such things as the song called *Prosperity*. But the resemblance to Heine, which he also notes, may strike more readers. In what does this resemblance consist? For certainly the resemblance is not greater than the difference. Heine's manner is often recalled by Mary Coleridge's use of simple measures, her light touch, her bold and vivid fancy:

> "By a lake below the mountain
> Hangs the birch, as if in glee
> The lake had flung the moon a fountain,
> She had turned it to a tree."

But also it is recalled by the fusion of an intellectual element in the poignant treatment of emotion;

> "The weapon that you fought with was a word,
> And with that word you stabbed me to the heart.
> Not once but twice you did it, for the sword
> Made no blood start.
>
> "They have not tried you for your life. You go
> Strong in such innocence as men will boast.
> They have not buried me. They do not know
> Life from its ghost."

With a keen mind continually darting fresh light on the subjects of her thoughts and feelings, Mary Coleridge, like Heine, some-

times turns upon herself, but in a different way. With Heine it seems to be the sudden recognition of an over-indulgence in sentiment, which the other side of him turns upon and mocks. With Mary Coleridge it seems to be a sudden apprehension that some emotion she has expressed may not have been absolutely true to herself after all, and she seeks yet more exactingly to strip all disguise from the reality within. This is especially seen in some poems of religious inspiration, and these are the farthest removed from likeness to Heine's spirit. Heine was easily bitter: Mary Coleridge could never have been made bitter, any more than she could have become sentimental, though she was capable of profound grief. Her spirituality of nature was too radiant and alive for either weakness. In that she was akin to Blake.

No one would suggest that Mary Coleridge's actual production could be compared to Heine's in power or range; but it is a tribute to her originality and lyric art that the best of her poems bear comparison with the work of so renowned a master.

Some of the most successful of the poems are impersonal or "dramatic" in Browning's sense. They have a romantic strangeness for their beauty, and are concerned with mysterious themes or actual wizardry. The situation is suggested rather than defined; and the reader is left baffled in his curiosity yet content with an enigmatic effect, so powerful is the impression of magical atmosphere. Instead of telling a complete story, the poetess prefers to show a glimpse of figures in passionate action, as if seen in a momentary beam of intense light against darkness; and the verse in such pieces has a kind of gay vehemence that is very characteristic of her genius. There was indeed in the movements of her mind, as her verse reflects them, something of the caprice of a bird's motion and a bird's singing; and, though the inconsequence is partly a weakness, it certainly belongs to her charm.

The little volume that contains all of Mary Coleridge's poetical production is remarkable for lyric variety, but not less for the impression it gives of an impassioned unity beneath. The poems remain, in Mr. Bridges' words, as " an absolutely truthful picture of a wondrously beautiful and gifted spirit;" and this, beyond all other qualities that they possess, is the main secret of their sometimes mysterious attraction.

LAURENCE BINYON.

Sonnet

"To thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

True to myself am I, and false to all.
Fear, sorrow, love, constrain us till we die.
But when the lips betray the spirit's cry,
The will, that should be sovereign, is a thrall.
Therefore let terror slay me, ere I call
For aid of men. Let grief begrudge a sigh.
"Are you afraid?"—"unhappy?" "No!" The lie
About the shrinking truth stands like a wall.
"And have you loved?" "No, never." All the while,
The heart within my flesh is turned to stone.
Yea, none the less that I account it vile,
The heart within my heart makes speechless moan,
And when they see one face, one face alone,
The stern eyes of the soul are moved to smile.

Our Lady

Mother of God! no lady thou:
Common woman of common earth!
Our Lady ladies call thee now,
But Christ was never of gentle birth;
A common man of the common earth.

For God's ways are not as our ways.
The noblest lady in the land
Would have given up half her days,
Would have cut off her right hand,
To bear the Child that was God of the land.

Never a lady did he choose,
Only a maid of low degree,
So humble she might not refuse
The carpenter of Galilee.
A daughter of the people, she.

Out she sang the song of her heart.
Never a lady so had sung.
She knew no letters, had no art;
To all mankind, in woman's tongue,
Hath Israelitish Mary sung.

And still for men to come she sings,
Nor shall her singing pass away.
He hath filled the hungry with good things—
Oh, listen, lords and ladies gay!—
And the rich he hath sent empty away.

Unwelcome

We were young, we were merry, we were very very wise,
And the door stood open at our feast,
When there passed us a woman with the West in her eyes
And a man with his back to the East.

O, still grew the hearts that were beating so fast,
The loudest voice was still.
The jest died away on our lips as they passed,
And the rays of July struck chill.

The cups of red wine turned pale on the board,
The white bread black as soot.
The hound forgot the hand of her lord,
She fell down at his foot.

Low let me lie where the dead dog lies,
Ere I sit me down again at a feast,
When there passes a woman with the West in her eyes
And a man with his back to the East.

Jealousy

"The myrtle bush grew shady
  Down by the ford."—
"Is it even so?" said my lady.
  "Even so!" said my lord.
"The leaves are set too thick together
  For the point of a sword."

"The arras in your room hangs close,
  No light between!
You wedded one of those
  That see unseen."—
"Is it even so?" said the King's Majesty.
  "Even so!" said the Queen.

A Moment

The clouds had made a crimson crown
  About the mountains high.
The stormy sun was going down
  In a stormy sky.

Why did you let your eyes so rest on me,
  And hold your breath between?
In all the ages this can never be
  As if it had not been.

L'Oiseau Bleu

The lake lay blue below the hill.
  O'er it, as I looked, there flew
Across the waters, cold and still,
  A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,
  The sky beneath me blue in blue.
A moment, ere the bird had passed
  It caught his image as he flew.

Shadow

Child of my love! though thou be bright as day,
  Though all the sons of joy laugh and adore thee,
Thou canst not throw thy shadow self away.
  Where thou dost come, the earth is darker for thee.

When thou dost pass, a flower that saw the sun
  Sees him no longer.
The hosts of darkness are, thou radiant one,
  Through thee made stronger.

The Shield

I have forged me in sevenfold heats
  A shield from foes and lovers,
And no one knows the heart that beats
  Beneath the shield that covers.

A Mother to her Baby

Where were you, Baby?
  Where were you, dear?
Even I have known you
  Only a year.

You were born, Baby,
  When I was born,
Twelve months ago you
  Left me forlorn.

Why did you leave me,
  Heart of my heart?
Then I was all of you,
  Now you are part.

You lived while I lived,
  We two were one.
We two are two now
  While the days run.

Every maid born, love,
  Womanly, mild,
Is in herself, love,
  Mother and child.

Christ's Friends

Before Thine Altar on my bended knees
When I remember those Thy friends that lie
Helpless and hopeless, sunk in misery,
O Christ, I love Thee, but I love not these.

Without them I may never hope to please
That friend of theirs who had no word to say
When from his side the rich man turned away.
O Christ, Thou lov'st not me. Thou lovest these.

Friends—with a Difference

O, one I need to love me,
  And one to understand,
And one to soar above me,
  And one to clasp my hand,

And one to make me slumber,
  And one to bid me strive,
But seven's the sacred number
  That keeps the soul alive.

And first and last of seven,
  And all the world and more,
Is she I need in Heaven
  And may not need before.

"Whether I Live"

Whether I live, or whether I die,
  Whatever the worlds I see,
I shall come to you by and by,
  And you will come to me.

Whoever was foolish, we were wise,
  We crossed the boundary line.
I saw my soul look out of your eyes,
  You saw your soul in mine.

LIONEL JOHNSON

[Lionel Pigot Johnson was born at Broadstairs, March 15, 1867. He was a scholar of Winchester College and afterwards of New College, Oxford. In 1890 he settled in London, and wrote much criticism. His first prose book, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, was published in 1894. Two books of poems appeared in his lifetime: *Poems*, 1895; and *Ireland*, 1897. In 1891 he was received into the Church of Rome. In later years an enthusiastic interest in Ireland absorbed him more and more. He visited Ireland but never travelled outside the British Isles. He was small and frail in physique. At the end of September, 1902, he had a fall in Fleet Street which broke his skull, and he died on October 4, in St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Three different selections from his poetry appeared in 1904, 1908, and 1916, and his Poetical Works were published in 1915 by Elkin Mathews.]

One might say that scholarship was the abiding passion of Lionel Johnson's life; but scholarship interpreted in a gracious and a genial sense, imaginative scholarship, the devotion to "humane letters," not learning pursued merely for learning's sake. "Dear human books," he writes in one of his poems. His books and friends were his most prized possessions; and the books because they were friends. Though he was anything but a typical English schoolboy, no one has celebrated so ardently and abundantly as Johnson his love for his school and his college. Winchester and Oxford, homes of learning, homes of immemorial tradition, with their ancient beauty of buildings and gardens, yet in their atmosphere renewed continually by the companionship of youth; these venerable places inspired some of his happiest verse. He loved the landscape in which they are set, both for its own sake and still more for its associations. When he came to live in London it was the yet richer and more august traditions of its streets which made them, too, enchanted ground. Yet he was no mere dweller in the past who averts his face from the present. He relished his own day and all its interests. He was a humanist, like Pater, who, with Arnold and with Newman, deeply influenced him; and human history was to him a kind of immense cathedral,

the shrine of heroes, saints, and poets, in which one could wander still and listen to the music of the immortals.

With such a temperament, it was natural that Johnson should be drawn to Catholicism. His love of comely order, his intense attachment to tradition, no less than deeper instincts of his nature, were satisfied in the Church of Rome. His finest poems are religious, or have a religious tinge. He uses language as a kind of ritual. He wrote ecclesiastical Latin poems admirably and with ease. No English poet indeed belongs more closely than Johnson to the Latin tradition. He wished to be, and even persuaded himself that he was, Irish; he loved Celtic things; but his verse echoes Virgil's wistfulness rather than the immaterial melancholy of the Celt. True child of Oxford, he was drawn to lost causes. His best known poem celebrates Charles I. Yet it is characteristic of Johnson's wide imaginative sympathies that he could write of Cromwell hardly less finely, in the poem which begins—

> "Now on his last of ways
> The great September star
> That crowned him on the days
> Of Worcester and Dunbar,
> Shines through the menacing night afar."

Johnson used a considerable variety of metres, but was happiest in the more formal types. He was fond of writing sonnets in Alexandrines, and made a pensive languid beauty of his own out of this unusual form. But many of his best pieces are in short measures, like the *Charles I.* The astringent brevity of these strengthened his style: for with all his nicety and exactness, he was sometimes seduced by a love of language for its own sake, a love of beautiful and sonorous words, so that the diction seems like a rich, stiff vestment over the thought rather than moulded closely on its form. He had a weakness for words like *magnifical, perdurable, roseal;* epithets that a younger school would recoil from, in virtuous horror of "literary" language. Johnson, moved by no such feeling, preferred consecrated words, rich in associations of the past. He was inclined to write too much, and not always with quite adequate motive. But if he failed of true Latin terseness, he was never rhetorical in the sense of being merely sounding or insincere. Most of his verse, it must be remembered, was written when he was a very young man; in his later poems, such as the memorial lines on Walter Pater written just before

his own death, the note of a deeper emotional experience is heard, and the poetry gains thereby. In the best of his poems there is a mingling of austerity and ornateness, of ardour and discipline, which gives them a peculiar distinction. And at the core of them is a spiritual fire burning clearest in that poem (omitted from our selection for lack or room) which ends with the cry:

"Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not so,
Dark Angel! triumph over me:
Lonely, unto the Lone I go;
Divine, to the Divinity."

LAURENCE BINYON.

BY THE STATUE OF KING CHARLES AT CHARING CROSS

Sombre and rich, the skies;
Great glooms, and starry plains.
Gently the night wind sighs;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me; and around
The saddest of all kings
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall:
Only the night wind glides:
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone too, his Court; and yet,
The stars his courtiers are:
Stars in their stations set;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal king:
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate:
The stars; or those sad eyes?
Which are more still and great:
Those brows; or the skies?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy:
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends:
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life, and hapless? Nay:
Through death, life grew sublime.
Speak after sentence? Yea;
And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom:
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vexed in the world's employ:
His soul was of the saints;
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!
Men hunger for thy grace:
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet, when the city sleeps;
When all the cries are still:
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

The Church of a Dream

Sadly the dead leaves rustle in the whistling wind,
Around the weather-worn, gray church, low down the vale:
The Saints in glorious vesture shake before the gale;
The glorious windows shake, where still they dwell enshrined;

Old Saints by long dead, shrivelled hands long since designed:
There still, although the world autumnal be, and pale,
Still in thin golden vesture the old Saints prevail;
Alone with Christ, desolate else, left by mankind.

Only one ancient Priest offers the Sacrifice,
Murmuring holy Latin immemorial:
Swaying with tremulous hands the old censer full of spice,
In gray, sweet incense clouds; blue, sweet clouds mystical:
To him, in place of men, for he is old, suffice
Melancholy remembrances and vesperal.

The End

I gave you more than love: many times more:
I gave mine honour into your fair keeping.
You lost mine honour: wherefore now restore
The love I gave; not dead, but cold and sleeping.
You loveless, I dishonoured, go our ways:
Dead is the past: dead must be all my days.

Death and the shadows tarry not: fulfil
Your years with folly and love's imitation.
You had mine all: mine only now, to kill
All trembling memories of mine adoration.
That done, to lie me down, and die, and dream,
What once, I thought you were: what still, you seem.

Walter Pater

Gracious God rest him! he who toiled so well
Secrets of grace to tell
Graciously; as the awed rejoicing priest
Officiates at the feast,
Knowing how deep within the liturgies
Lie hid the mysteries.
Half of a passionately pensive soul
He showed us, not the whole:
Who loved him best, they best, they only, knew
The deeps they might not view;

That which was private between God and him;
To others, justly dim.
Calm Oxford autumns and preluding springs!
To me your memory brings
Delight upon delight, but chiefest one:
The thought of Oxford's son,
Who gave me of his welcome and his praise,
When white were still my days;
Ere death had left life darkling, nor had sent
Lament upon lament:
Ere sorrow told me how I loved my lost
And bade me base love's cost.
Scholarship's constant saint, he kept her light
In him divinely white:
With cloistral jealousness of ardour strove
To guard her sacred grove,
Inviolate by worldly feet, nor paced
In desecrating haste.
Oh, sweet grave smiling of that wisdom, brought
From arduous ways of thought;
Oh, golden patience of that travailing soul
So hungered for the goal,
And vowed to keep, through subtly vigilant pain,
From pastime on the plain,
Enamoured of the difficult mountain air
Up beauty's Hill of Prayer!

* * * * * *

Ended, his service: yet albeit farewell
Tolls the faint vesper bell,
Patient beneath his Oxford trees and towers
He still is gently ours:
Hierarch of the spirit, pure and strong,
Worthy Uranian song.
Gracious God keep him: and God grant to me
By miracle to see
That unforgettably most gracious friend,
In the never-ending end.

RUPERT BROOKE

[RUPERT BROOKE was born at Rugby, August 3, 1887, and educated at Rugby School, where his father, William Brooke, was a housemaster. In 1905 he won a prize with a poem on *The Bastille*. In 1906 he went up to King's College, Cambridge, and after taking a classical degree, lived at Grantchester, publishing his first volume of poems in 1911. In 1913 he was elected a Fellow of King's, and started for a year's travel in America, Samoa, and Tahiti. In September, 1914, he joined the Hood Division of the R. N. V. R. as a sub-lieutenant; took part in the Antwerp expedition in October, and sailed again on February 28, 1915, for the Dardanelles. He died of blood-poisoning at Lemnos, April 23, 1915, on board a French hospital ship, and was buried in the island of Imbros. A second volume of his collected verse, *1914 and other Poems*, was published in 1915, shortly after his death.]

Few men are so obviously born to distinction as Rupert Brooke; he shone from first to last, and seldom disappointed expectation. He had no disadvantages to contend with; his athletic and intellectual gifts matched the beauty of his form and face; his whole personality was radiant. When his first volume of poems appeared it gained at once the recognition which his friends had anticipated: among the new constellation of the "Georgian Poets" he was instantly seen to be the brightest star. So much ardour and freshness put forth with such sureness of utterance, seemed to call only for enthusiasm. The volume was followed by a number of single poems, all beautiful and successful; then came the five sonnets on the War, a self-dedication and a forecast of a happy warrior's death. Lastly, when that forecast had been fulfilled and deeply mourned, a final volume was received with an outpouring of affectionate admiration, such as has seldom been given to a young poet by his contemporaries. It was made clear that in a great moment, black with storm, his radiance had lightened the eyes of his countrymen.

It has been questioned whether such a reputation, won, as it were, by surprise, and confirmed in the emotion of a national crisis, is likely to stand the test of time. Time will show; but it may be noted that Brooke's work is remarkable for originality

and sanity, two qualities which in combination have always made for permanence. His artistic method was adapted rather than invented, but was none the less original. It would hardly be conceivable that a poet of his temperament should spend patience in elaborating a new instrument; he took up the old, with confidence that whoever had tried the strings before him, a new and living hand would bring new and living tones from them. So with the content of his poetry: his subjects were for the most part Love and Death, and he had no fear of coming to them in too late a day, for what he had to record was his own experience, and that he knew must be unique. He speaks of Beauty, but not, as some have done, of the search for it: for him expression was the peremptory need, and Beauty a matter of vision. How intense, and how original in its intensity, was his vision of things in themselves commonplace, may be most easily proved by *The Fish*, a poem in which he has almost endowed humanity with a new and non-human rapture of sensation. Again, in *Dining-room Tea* he has taken an ordinary domestic interior and has arrested, in a familar moment, the kinematograph of eye and brain by which existence is displayed to us as an unending, unseverable tissue of changing action. So much a painter might have done; but the poet has done more—he has thrown over the picture the light of vision, the light, invisible to others, of the eternal reality lying behind the appearances of transitory life.

In his love poems, which form the greater part of his work, the same intensity is felt: it enters into every one of many moods, some of them the contradictory opposite of each other. Brooke was not perhaps much more inconsistent in his philosophy than other men, but he had this peculiarity, that he cared little for the construction of a watertight theory of life, and was too honest, or too detached, to take any account of his own inconsistencies. He alternated between moods, and set them all down with perfect sincerity, notwithstanding that some of them were moods of belief. In the mood of *Tiare Tahiti* he mocks gently at immortality; in *The Hill*, *Second Best*, and *Mutability* he is splendidly or sadly convinced that it is a vain hope. But in *The Great Lover* he cries, "Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake," and in *The Soldier* he bids his friends think of his heart as a pulse in the Eternal Mind, giving back, no less, the thoughts by England given.

As with the survival of the soul, so with the survival of love: he was alternately a passionate believer and a bitter sceptic. In

Dust, in *The Wayfarers*, in the sonnet *Not with vain tears*, his hope has an ardent certainty which might well carry a world upon its wings; while in *Kindliness*, in *Thoughts on the Shape of the Human Body*, in the sonnet *Love is a Breach in the Walls*, he proclaims the opposite conviction: love, that was sweet lies at most, grows false and dull, "and all love is but this." It must be so, for man's very nature is a deformity in the world of ideal love.

There are poems more merciless even than these: *Dead Men's Love*, for example, and *Town and Country* and *Libidò;* but bitter as he can be, Brooke is not cynical. His contempt is always for a lower as compared with a possible higher: the observation is amazingly faithful, the resulting expression never affected or rhetorical or merely rhapsodic. It is the simple truth that at one time he burns with one feeling, at another time with another: there is no attempt at synthesis, and no reticence: the ardour is breathed out, the doubts cried aloud, just as they came to him. A study of the dates of the poems named will show that they record not a gradual development, but an alternating series of moods equally natural, called forth no doubt by deeply-felt changes of circumstance. The collector of poetical gems will reject the records of pain and despair; the moralist will perhaps disapprove a story which has little to say of prudence or restraint, but tells of experience accepted freely and at a stage when it must inevitably be followed by regret.

Yet of Brooke, as of others, it is true that the poet is greater than any of his poems, his story more significant than any of its pages. These two little volumes are not a pocket of unequal gems nor the indiscreet revelation of a too-young lover's secrets, they are fragmentary passages from a spiritual drama. How profoundly felt and how movingly uttered may be judged by any one who will read the sonnet called *Waikiki*—the cry of one haunted by remembrance in the Circean Islands of the Pacific. Dramatically too came war to cut the tangled threads: but it was a joyful deliverance only because it gave opportunity to another energy of this glowing spirit. Though utterly careless, it would seem, of personal salvation, he had a sane and virile love of righteousness for its own sake, and with this a natural desire to be freed and perfected. He had also the Englishman's normal love of his own country, a love untroubled by political theories or conscientious objections because it knows how to judge of nations and their dreams. In the last poems of this soldier, England is not a world

power nor even a vision of unbuilt hopes, but a land of kindly life and kindly memories. If these are set for a moment over against the deeds and dreams of our enemies, it will be understood how truly Rupert Brooke spoke for his generation when he offered his life for the beauty and the fellowship from which he knew he had received it.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

DUST [1]

When the white flame in us is gone,
  And we that lost the world's delight
Stiffen in darkness, left alone
  To crumble in our separate night;

When your swift hair is quiet in death,
  And through the lips corruption thrust
Has stilled the labour of my breath—
  When we are dust, when we are dust!—

Not dead, not undesirous yet,
  Still sentient, still unsatisfied,
We'll ride the air, and shine, and flit,
  Around the places where we died,

And dance as dust before the sun,
  And light of foot, and unconfined,
Hurry from road to road, and run
  About the errands of the wind.

And every mote, on earth or air,
  Will speed and gleam, down later days,
And like a secret pilgrim fare
  By eager and invisible ways,

Nor ever rest, nor ever lie,
  Till, beyond thinking, out of view,
One mote of all the dust that's I
  Shall meet one atom that was you.

Then in some garden hushed from wind,
  Warm in a sunset's afterglow,
The lovers in the flowers will find
  A sweet and strange unquiet grow

[1] These selections from the writings of Rupert Brooke are reprinted by permission of Rupert Brooke's publishers from Brooke's Poems, copyright 1915 by John Lane Company.

Upon the peace; and, past desiring,
So high a beauty in the air,
And such a light, and such a quiring,
And such a radiant ecstasy there,

They'll know not if it's fire, or dew,
Or out of earth, or in the height,
Singing, or flame, or scent, or hue,
Or two that pass, in light, to light,

Out of the garden, higher, higher . . .
But in that instant they shall learn
The shattering ecstasy of our fire,
And the weak passionless hearts will burn

And faint in that amazing glow,
Until the darkness close above;
And they will know—poor fools, they'll know!—
One moment, what it is to love.

The Fish

In a cool curving world he lies
And ripples with dark ecstasies.
The kind luxurious lapse and steal
Shapes all his universe to feel
And know and be; the clinging stream
Closes his memory, glooms his dream,
Who lips the roots o' the shore, and glides
Superb on unreturning tides.
Those silent waters weave for him
A fluctuant mutable world and dim,
Where wavering masses bulge and gape
Mysterious, and shape to shape
Dies momently through whorl and hollow,
And form and line and solid follow
Solid and line and form to dream
Fantastic down the eternal stream;
An obscure world, a shifting world,
Bulbous, or pulled to thin, or curled,
Or serpentine, or driving arrows,
Or serene slidings, or March narrows,

There slipping wave and shore are one,
And weed and mud. No ray of sun,
But glow to glow fades down the deep
(As dream to unknown dream in sleep);
Shaken translucency illumes
The hyaline of drifting glooms;
The strange soft-handed depth subdues
Drowned colour there, but black to hues,
As death to living, decomposes—
Red darkness of the heart of roses,
Blue brilliant from dead starless skies,
And gold that lies behind the eyes,
The unknown unnameable sightless white
That is the essential flame of night,
Lustreless purple, hooded green,
The myriad hues that lie between
Darkness and darkness! . . .

And all's one,
Gentle, embracing, quiet, dun,
The world he rests in, world he knows,
Perpetual curving. Only—grows
An eddy in that ordered falling
A knowledge from the gloom, a calling
Weed in the wave, gleam in the mud—
The dark fire leaps along his blood;
Dateless and deathless, blind and still,
The intricate impulse works its will;
His woven world drops back; and he,
Sans providence, sans memory,
Unconscious and directly driven,
Fades to some dank sufficient heaven.

O world of lips, O world of laughter,
Where hope is fleet and thought flies after,
Of lights in the clear night, of cries
That drift along the wave and rise
Thin to the glittering stars above,
You know the hands, the eyes of love!
The strife of limbs, the sightless clinging,
The infinite distance, and the singing

Blown by the wind, a flame of sound,
The gleam, the flowers, and vast around
The horizon, and the heights above—
You know the sigh, the song of love!

But there the night is close, and there
Darkness is cold and strange and bare;
And the secret deeps are whisperless;
And rhythm is all deliciousness;
And joy is in the throbbing tide,
Whose intricate fingers treat and glide
In felt bewildering harmonies
Of trembling touch; and music is
The exquisite knocking of the blood.
Space is no more, under the mud;
His bliss is older than the sun.
Silent and straight the waters run.
The lights, the cries, the willows dim,
And the dark tide are one with him.

Dining-room Tea

When you were there, and you, and you,
Happiness crowned the night; I too,
Laughing and looking, one of all,
I watched the quivering lamplight fall
On plate and flowers and pouring tea
And cup and cloth; and they and we
Flung all the dancing moments by
With jest and glitter. Lip and eye
Flashed on the glory, shone and cried,
Improvident, unmemoried;
And fitfully and like a flame
The light of laughter went and came.
Proud in their careless transience moved
The changing faces that I loved.

Till suddenly, and otherwhence,
I looked upon your innocence.
For lifted clear and still and strange
From the dark woven flow of change

Under a vast and starless sky
I saw the immortal moment lie.
One instant I, an instant, knew
As God knows all. And it and you
I, above Time, oh, blind! could see
In witless immortality.
I saw the marble cup; the tea,
Hung on the air, an amber stream;
I saw the fire's unglittering gleam,
The painted flame, the frozen smoke.
No more the flooding lamplight broke
On flying eyes and lips and hair;
But lay, but slept unbroken there,
On stiller flesh, and body breathless,
And lips and laughter stayed and deathless,
And words on which no silence grew.
Light was more alive than you.
For suddenly, and otherwhence,
I looked on your magnificence.
I saw the stillness and the light,
And you, august, immortal, white,
Holy and strange; and every glint
Posture and jest and thought and tint
Freed from the mask of transiency,
Triumphant in eternity,
Immote, immortal.

Dazed at length
Human eyes grew, mortal strength
Wearied; and Time began to creep.
Change closed about me like a sleep.
Light glinted on the eyes I loved.
The cup was filled. The bodies moved.
The drifting petal came to ground.
The laughter chimed its perfect round.
The broken syllable was ended.
And I, so certain and so friended,
How could I cloud, or how distress,
The heaven of your unconsciousness?
Or shake at Time's sufficient spell,
Stammering of lights unutterable?

The eternal holiness of you,
The timeless end, you never knew,
The peace that lay, the light that shone.
You never knew that I had gone
A million miles away, and stayed
A million years. The laughter played
Unbroken round me; and the jest
Flashed on. And we that knew the best
Down wonderful hours grew happier yet.
I sang at heart, and talked, and eat,
And lived from laugh to laugh, I too,
When you were there, and you, and you.

Tiare Tahiti

Mamua, when our laughter ends,
And hearts and bodies, brown as white,
Are dust about the door of friends,
Or scent a-blowing down the night,
Then, oh! then, the wise agree,
Comes our immortality.
Mamua, there waits a land
Hard for us to understand.
Out of time, beyond the sun,
All are one in Paradise,
You and Pupure are one,
And Taü, and the ungainly wise.
There the Eternals are, and there
The Good, the Lovely, and the True,
And Types, whose earthly copies were
The foolish broken things we knew;
There is the Face, whose ghosts we are;
The real, the never-setting Star;
And the Flower, of which we love
Faint and fading shadows here;
Never a tear, but only grief;
Dance, but not the limbs that move;
Songs in Song shall disappear;
Instead of lovers, Love shall be;
For hearts, Immutability;

And there, on the Ideal Reef,
Thunders the Everlasting Sea!
And my laughter and my pain
Shall home to the Eternal Brain,
And all lovely things, they say,
Meet in loveliness again;
Miri's laugh, Teïpa's feet,
And the hands of Matua,
Stars and sunlight there shall meet,
Coral's hues and rainbows there,
And Teüra's braided hair;
And with the starred *tiare's* white,
And white birds in the dark ravine,
And *flamboyants* ablaze at night,
And jewels, and evening's after-green,
And dawns of pearl and gold and red,
Mamua, your lovelier head!
And there'll no more be one who dreams
Under the ferns, of crumbling stuff,
Eyes of illusion, mouth that seems,
All time-entangled human love.
And you'll no longer swing and sway
Divinely down the scented shade,
Where feet to Ambulation fade,
And morns are lost in endless Day.
How shall we wind these wreaths of ours,
Where there are neither heads nor flowers?
Oh! Heaven's Heaven!—but we'll be missing
The palms, and sunlight, and the south;
And there's an end, I think, of kissing,
When our mouths are one with Mouth. . . .
Taü here, Mamua,
Crown the hair, and come away!
Hear the calling of the moon,
And the whispering scents that stray
About the idle warm lagoon.
Hasten, hand in human hand,
Down the dark, the flowered way,
Along the whiteness of the sand,
And in the water's soft caress,
Wash the mind of foolishness,

Mamua, until the day.
Spend the glittering moonlight there
Pursuing down the soundless deep
Limbs that gleam and shadowy hair,
Or floating lazy, half-asleep,
Dive and double and follow after,
Snare in flowers, and kiss, and call,
With lips that fade, and human laughter
And faces individual,
Well this side of Paradise! . . .
There's little comfort in the wise.

PAPEETE, *February*, 1914.

THE GREAT LOVER

I have been so great a lover: filled my days
So proudly with the splendour of Love's praise,
The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,
Desire illimitable, and still content,
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear
Our hearts at random down the dark of life.
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife
Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far.
My night shall be remembered for a star
That outshone all the suns of all men's days.
Shall I not crown them with immortal praise
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me
High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see
The inenarrable godhead of delight?
Love is a flame;—we have beaconed the world's night.
A city:—and we have built it, these and I.
An emperor:—we have taught the world to die.
So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,
And the high cause of Love's magnificence,
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names
Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,
And set them as a banner, that men may know,
To dare the generations, burn, and blow

Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming. . . .
These I have loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamplight; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-fasting food:
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;
Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen:
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;
The good smell of old clothes; and other such—
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .
Dear names,
And thousand other throng to me! Royal flames;
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;
Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing;
Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;
Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home;
And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold
Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mould;
Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;
And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;
And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass;—
All these have been my loves. And these shall pass,
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
To hold them with me through the gate of Death.
They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath,
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
And sacramented covenant to the dust.
—Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,

And give what's left of love again, and make
New friends, now strangers. . . .
But the best I've known,
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown
About the winds of the world, and fades from brains
Of living men, and dies.
Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again
This one last gift I give: that after men
Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed,
Praise you, "All these were lovely"; say, "He loved."

MATAIEA, 1914.

SONNET

(Suggested by some of the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research)

Not with vain tears, when we're beyond the sun,
We'll beat on the substantial doors, nor tread
Those dusty high-roads of the aimless dead
Plaintive for Earth; but rather turn and run.
Down some close-covered by-way of the air,
Some low sweet alley between wind and wind,
Stoop under faint gleams, thread the shadows, find
Some whispering ghost-forgotten nook, and there

Spend in pure converse our eternal day;
Think each in each immediately wise;
Learn all we lacked before; hear, know, and say
What this tumultuous body now denies;
And feel, who have laid our groping hands away;
And see, no longer blinded by our eyes.

Waikiki

Warm perfumes like a breath from vine and tree
  Drift down the darkness. Plangent, hidden from eyes,
  Somewhere an *eukaleli* thrills and cries
And stabs with pain the night's brown savagery.
And dark scents whisper; and dim waves creep to me,
  Gleam like a woman's hair, stretch out, and rise;
  And new stars burn into the ancient skies,
Over the murmurous soft Hawaian sea.

And I recall, lose, grasp, forget again,
  And still remember, a tale I have heard, or known—
An empty tale, of idleness and pain,
  Of two that loved—or did not love—and one
Whose perplexed heart did evil, foolishly,
A long while since, and by some other sea.

Beauty and Beauty

When Beauty and Beauty meet
  All naked, fair to fair,
The earth is crying—sweet,
  And scattering—bright the air,
Eddying, dizzying, closing round,
  With soft and drunken laughter;
Veiling all that may befall
  After—after—

Where Beauty and Beauty met
  Earth's still a-tremble there,
And winds are scented yet,
  And memory soft the air,
Bosoming, folding glints of light,
  And shreds of shadowy laughter;
Not the tears that fill the years
  After—after—

The Dead. I [1]

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

The Dead. II

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colours of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music; known
Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

[1] These three sonnets, with two others, introduced the volume "1914" and were written soon after Brooke had joined the army.

The Soldier

If I should die, think only this of me:
  That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
  In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
  Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
  Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
  A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
    Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
  And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
    In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

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